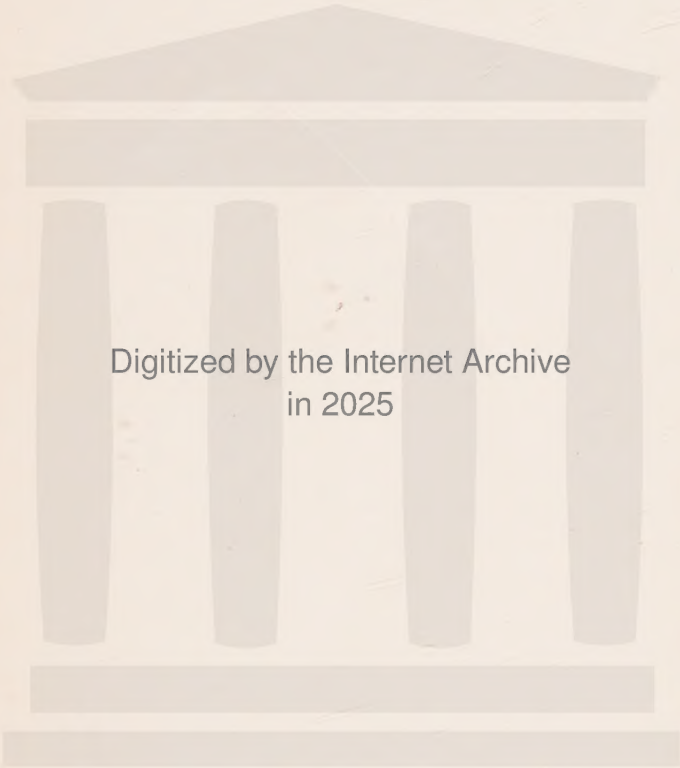
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THE DRAMAS

OF

VICTOR HUGO

HERNANI

ESMERALDA

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Dramas

Hernani, Esmeralda

by

Victor Hugo

WITH ETCHINGS

NEW YORK AND BOSTON
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HERNANI

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PREFACE

The author of this drama wrote the following words some few weeks since, apropos of the premature death of a youthful poet:

"At this moment of literary contention and tumult, which are to be pitied, those who die, or those who are in the fight? Doubtless it is a sad thing to see a poet of twenty years go to his long account, a lyre broken, and a future of great promise fade away: but is not the mere repose worth something? May not they be permitted, who are buried beneath the incessant avalanche of slander, insult, hatred, jealousy, underhand intrigue and base treachery: loyal men against whom disloyal war is waged; devoted men, whose only wish is to endow their country with one more element of true liberty, the liberty of art and of intelligence: laborious men, who peacefully pursue their work of conscience, victims on the one hand of vile machinations of the censorship and the police, and betrayed,

too often, on the other hand, by the ingratitude of the very persons in whose interest they are working; may not they, I ask, be permitted now and then to turn their gaze enviously upon those who have fallen behind them, and are sleeping in the tomb? '*Invideo,*' said Luther in the cemetery at Worms, '*invideo, quia quiescunt.*'

"But after all, what matters it? Young men, let us be of good cheer! However hard the present may be made for us, the future will be glorious. Romanticism, which has been so often erroneously defined, is, upon the whole—and this is the only true definition, if it is viewed simply as an aggressive quality—nothing more nor less than *liberalism* applied to literature. This truth is already pretty generally understood by people of intelligence, and their name is legion; and it will not be long, for the work is already well advanced, before literary liberalism will be no less popular than political liberalism. Liberty in art and liberty in society, such is the double goal toward which all consistent and logical minds should journey side by side; such is the double banner which attracts all

the lusty, patient youth of to-day, with the exception of a very few minds, which will be enlightened in time; and with the youth, and at their head, the chosen few of the preceding generation, the wise old men, who, after the first moment of suspicion and inquiry, have come to realize that what their sons do is the result of what themselves have done, and that literary liberty is the daughter of political liberty. This principle is the principle of the age and will prevail. The *Ultras* of every sort, classical as well as monarchical, will lend their aid to no purpose to restore the old régime in every walk of life, society and literature: every step that the country takes in the path of progress, every development of the popular intellect, every step toward liberty will help to demolish all that they have built up, and their efforts to produce reaction will have been altogether fruitless. In times of revolution every movement must be forward. Truth and liberty have this great advantage, that everything which is done in their behalf, and everything which is done to injure them, is equally serviceable to them. Now, after all the great things that our fathers

have done and we have seen, we have put off at last the old social form: why do we not put off the old poetic form? For a new generation, new art. While paying its tribute of admiration to the literature of Louis XIV., so well adapted to his monarchy, the France of to-day, the France of the nineteenth century, which owes its liberty to Mirabeau, and its glory to Napoleon, ought certainly to have a literature of its own, individual and national.''[1]

The author begs to be forgiven for quoting himself: his words are so little calculated to impress themselves upon the mind, that it is necessary to repeat them frequently. Moreover, it is perhaps not unseasonable to-day to place before the reader the two pages we have transcribed. It is not that this drama can hope to deserve in any respect the enviable name of *new art*, or *new poetry*—far from it: but that the principle of liberty in literature has made a step forward; that progress has been made, not in art itself (this drama is too small a matter), but in the education of the public; and that, in this respect at least, a

part of the prognostications put forward in the passage quoted have been realized. There was, in truth, much risk in changing one's audience thus abruptly, and in transferring to the stage experiments which had hitherto been practised entirely upon paper, *which has to endure everything*. The public of printed books is very different from the public of the drama, and there was ground for fear that the second might reject what the first had accepted. But nothing of the sort occurred. The principle of literary freedom, already understood by the public which reads and thinks, was no less completely adopted by the vast crowd, thirsty for the pure emotion of true art, which fills the theatres of Paris to overflowing every evening. The loud and powerful voice of the people, which resembles the voice of God, has willed that poetry henceforth shall bear the same device that politics now bears:

TOLERANCE AND LIBERTY.

Now let the poet come forth! there is a public for him.

And this liberty, as the public would have it, is as it should be, consistent with good

order in the state, and with true art in literature. That the old rules of D'Aubignac should die with the old customs of Cujas is well; that a literature of the people should take the place of a literature of the court is even better; but above all that a foundation of good sense should be found at the bottom of all these novelties. Let the principle of liberty do its appointed work, but let it do it well. In letters, as in society, no etiquette, no anarchy, but law. No red heels, and no red caps.

Such is the desire of the public, and a most judicious desire. For ourselves, in deference to the public, which has received with so much indulgence an undertaking which deserved so little, we give this drama to-day, as it has been put upon the stage. The day will come perhaps to publish it as it was conceived by the author, indicating and discussing the modifications it has been made to undergo. These details of criticism may not be without interest and instructiveness, but they would seem tedious to-day; the liberty of art is conceded, the principal question solved; of what avail is it to tarry to discuss secondary

questions? However we will return to the subject some day, and we will also speak in detail, only to overwhelm it with facts and logic, of that censorship of the drama which is the only obstacle to the liberty of the stage, now that there has ceased to be any obstacle in the public. We will try, at our own risk, and from devotion to the interests of art, fitly to characterize this petty inquisition of the mind, which, like the other Holy Office, has its unknown judges, its masked executioners, its tortures and mutilations, and its death penalty. We will tear off, if it can be done, the police swaddling-clothes, in which it is shameful to the last degree that the stage should be swathed in this nineteenth century.

To-day there should be no room for aught but gratitude and thanks. The author of this drama offers his thanks to the public from the bottom of his heart. This work, not of talent, but of conscience and liberty, has been generously defended against many acts of hostility by the public, because the public is always, like himself, conscientious and free. Thanks be to the public, therefore, as well as to the vigorous youth, who have lent their

countenance and good will to the work of a young man, sincere and independent like themselves! It is for them above all that he works, because it would be the acme of glory to win the applause of that chosen band of young men, intelligent, logical, consistent, truly liberal in literature as in politics—a noble generation which does not refuse to open both eyes to the truth, and to receive the light from both sides.

Of his work considered by itself he will not speak. He welcomes the criticisms that have been made upon it, the most severe as well as the most kindly, because one may learn something from them all. He does not dare to flatter himself that every one at first sight understood this drama, to which the *Romancero General*[2] is the real key. He would be glad to request those persons who may be shocked by his work, to reread *Le Cid*, *Don Sanche*, *Nicomède*, or rather all of Corneille, and all of Molière, those great and marvelous poets. Such reading, if they will be good enough, first of all, to make allowances for the immeasurable inferiority of the author of *Hernani*, may lead them to be less severe as to certain matters in

the form or substance of this drama, which perhaps have wounded them. In short, it may be that the moment has not yet arrived to pass judgment upon it. *Hernani* is simply the first stone of an edifice which exists completely built in the author's head, but nothing less than a view of the whole structure can give any merit to this drama. Perhaps, some day a favorable opinion will be held of the whim which has seized him to emulate the architect of Bourges, and furnish his Gothic cathedral with a door almost Moorish in style.

Meanwhile he is well aware that what he has done is of little account. May time and strength not fail him to finish his work! It will be of no value unless it is finished. He is not one of those favored poets who can die, or interrupt their work before it is done, without danger to their memory; nor is he of those who remain great, even without bringing their work to completion, fortunate mortals, of whom one might say as Virgil said of half-built Carthage:

Pendent opera interrupta minaeque
Murorum ingentes.

March 9, 1830.

NOTES

[1] Letter to publishers of the Poems of M. Dovalle.

[2] The *Romancero General* was a collection of Spanish ballads published in thirteen parts, from 1605–14, from which, and from the smaller and earlier ballad-books, is still drawn nearly all that is curious and interesting in the old popular poetry of Spain. The whole number of ballads found in these volumes is considerably over a thousand.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

HERNANI
DON CARLOS
DON RUY GOMEZ DE SILVA
DONNA SOL DE SILVA
DUKE OF BAVARIA
DUKE OF GOTHA
DUKE OF LUTZELBOURG
DON SANCHO
DON MATIAS
DON RICARDO
DON GARCI SUAREZ
DON FRANCISCO
DON JUAN DE HARO
DON GIL TELLEZ GIRON
FIRST CONSPIRATOR
A MOUNTAINEER
IAQUEZ
DONNA JOSEFA DUARTE
A LADY

Conspirators of the Holy League, Germans and Spaniards.
Mountaineers, Lords, Soldiers, Pages,
Populace, etc.

Scene—Spain. *Time—1519.*

ACT FIRST

THE KING

SARAGOSSA

A bedchamber. Night. A lamp upon a table.

SCENE I

DONNA JOSEFA DUARTE. An elderly female, dressed in black, the skirt of her dress stitched with jet, after the style of Isabella, the Catholic: afterward DON CARLOS.

DONNA JOSEFA.

(She closes the crimson curtains at the window and arranges the chairs. A knock is heard upon a small masked door at the right. She listens. The knocking is repeated.)

Can it be he already?

(Renewed knocking.)

Surely 't is from the secret staircase.

(A fourth blow.)

I must open quickly.

(She opens the masked door. Enters Don Carlos, with his cloak pulled up to his nose and his hat over his eyes.)

Good even, sir knight.

(She admits him. He throws aside his cloak, disclosing a rich costume of silk and velvet, of the cut affected by Castilian noblemen in 1519. She looks into his face and recoils in dismay.)

What! 't is not you, Señor Hernani! Help! Fire!

DON CARLOS (seizing her arm).

Say two words more and you 're a dead duenna!

(He fixes a stern glance upon her, and she obeys in terror.)

Is this the domicile of Donna Sol, the promised wife of the old Duke of Pastraña, her uncle, a worthy fellow, albeit bald and venerable and jealous? 'T is said the fair one loves a youth, beardless and mustacheless, and beards the gossips by receiving her young beardless lover every evening, to her old lover's beard. Say, am I well informed?

(She makes no reply. He shakes her by the arm.)

Will you reply, perchance?

DONNA JOSEFA.

You bade me not to say two words, my master.

DON CARLOS.

And so I ask but one. Yes. No. Is thy good lady Donna Sol de Silva?

DONNA JOSEFA.

Yes. Why?

DON CARLOS.

Oh! for no reason. The duke, her old lover, is absent at this moment?

DONNA JOSEFA.

Yes.

DON CARLOS.

And doubtless she awaits the coming of her young spark?

DONNA JOSEFA.

Yes.

DON CARLOS.

Damnation!

DONNA JOSEFA.

Yes.

DON CARLOS.

Will they meet here?

DONNA JOSEFA.

Yes.

DON CARLOS.

Hide me somewhere.

DONNA JOSEFA.

You!

DON CARLOS.

Yes, me.

DONNA JOSEFA.

What for?

DON CARLOS.

Oh! for no reason.

DONNA JOSEFA.

I, hide you!

DON CARLOS.

Yes, in this room.

DONNA JOSEFA.

Never!

DON CARLOS (taking from his belt a dagger and a purse).

I pray you, madame, deign to make your choice between this dagger and this purse.

DONNA JOSEFA (taking the purse).

Are you the devil?

DON CARLOS.

Even so, duenna.

DONNA JOSEFA (opening a small closet in the wall).

Go you in here.

DON CARLOS (examining the closet).

This box?

DONNA JOSEFA (closing the door again).

Go elsewhere, if you 're not content.

DON CARLOS (reopening the closet).

Indeed?

(Examining it more closely.)

Is this the stable where you keep the broomstick that you ride at night?

(He squeezes himself into it with much ado.)

Ouf!

DONNA JOSEFA (clasping her hands as if scandalized).

A man in this room!

DON CARLOS (inside the closet, the door still open).

Is he for whom your mistress waits, a woman?

DONNA JOSEFA.

O Heaven! I hear a step, 't is Donna Sol! My lord, pray close the door.

(She pushes against the closet door, and closes it.)

DON CARLOS.

One word, duenna, and your life pays the forfeit.

DONNA JOSEFA (alone).

Who is this man? God help me! Suppose I call for help? But whom? Saving my lady and myself there 's not a soul awake in the whole palace. But never mind; the other one will come. It 's his affair. He has his trusty sword, and Heaven keep us all from hell!

(She weighs the purse.)

He 's not a robber, when all 's said and done.

(Donna Sol enters, dressed in white. Donna Josefa conceals the purse.)

SCENE II

DONNA JOSEFA, DONNA SOL, DON CARLOS, in the closet: afterward HERNANI.

DONNA SOL.

Josefa.

DONNA JOSEFA.

Yes, my lady.

DONNA SOL.

Ah me! I fear that something is amiss. Hernani should be here ere this.

(Footsteps are heard outside the small masked door.)

He 's coming up the stairs. Open before he knocks; be quick.

(Josefa opens the door. Hernani enters. Ample cloak, broad-brimmed hat. Beneath the cloak, an Aragonese mountaineer's costume, of gray, with a leather cuirass, a sword, a dagger, and a horn at his belt.)

DONNA SOL (running to meet him).

Hernani!

HERNANI.

Donna Sol! Ah! Do my eyes at last behold you? and my ears at last hear your dear

voice? Why has fate placed our paths in life so far asunder? I have such sore need of you to help me to forget.

DONNA SOL.

Merciful God! your cloak is dripping wet! Pray does it rain?

HERNANI.

I cannot say.

DONNA SOL.

You must be cold.

HERNANI.

'T is nothing.

DONNA SOL.

I beg you lay aside your cloak.

HERNANI.

Donna Sol, my own Donna Sol, when you lie sleeping, in your innocence and purity, a calm and happy sleep, which parts your lips and with soft fingers closes your dear eyes, does not an angel come to you and say how sweet you are to the poor wretch whom all the world abandons and casts out?

DONNA SOL.

You 're very late, my lord. But tell me, pray, if you 're not cold.

HERNANI.

Cold! by thy side I burn! Ah me! when jealous love is boiling in our brains, when a fierce tempest rages in our bursting hearts, what care we for the rain and lightning from a paltry passing cloud?

DONNA SOL (removing his cloak).

Go to! give me the cloak,—and the sword with it.

HERNANI (placing his hand upon the sword).

No, 't is my other friend, faithful and innocent. Pray, Donna Sol, is the old duke from home,—your uncle and your future husband?

DONNA SOL.

Yes, this hour is our own.

HERNANI.

This hour! nothing more. For us, only one swiftly flying hour! And after that, what matters what may come? one must forget, or

die. Angel! an hour with you! one hour, God save the mark! for him who fain would pass his life with you, and then eternity!

DONNA SOL.

Hernani!

HERNANI (bitterly).

How fortunate am I that the duke 's not at home! How like a trembling thief who forces in the door, I skurry in, and feast my eyes on you, and steal from your old lover an hour of your songs and your soft glances; and I am very fortunate, and doubtless he 'll begrudge me e'en the hour I steal from him, and take my life to pay for 't.

DONNA SOL.

Be calm.

(She passes the cloak to the duenna.)

Josefa, take this cloak, and see that it is dried.

(Exit Josefa.)

(Donna Sol sits down, and motions to Hernani to come to her.)

Come, sit you here.

HERNANI (who does not hear her).

And so the duke is absent from the castle?

DONNA SOL (smiling).

How tall you are!

HERNANI.

He is not here.

DONNA SOL.

Dear heart, let 's think no more about the duke.

HERNANI.

Nay, rather let us think of him, my lady! The dotard! he loves you, and is to marry you! Did he not take a kiss from you the other day? Not think of him, indeed!

DONNA SOL (laughing).

Is that the cause of your despair? An uncle's kiss! and on the brow! a kiss a father might have given!

HERNANI.

Not so. A lover's kiss, a husband's and a jealous husband's. Ah! you 'll be his, my lady! Think of it! O driveling dotard! who, when his head is bowed with age, must have a woman by his side to finish out his journey, and chooses, tottering spectre that he is, a fair young girl! O driveling dotard!

While with one hand he keeps fast hold of yours, does he not see that death is marrying the other? He thrusts himself between our hearts without a tremor! Old man! go give thy measure to the gravedigger. Who made this marriage? 'T is forced on you, I trust.

DONNA SOL.

'T is said that the king wishes it.

HERNANI.

The king! the king! my father died upon the scaffold, condemned to death by his. Now, notwithstanding that that deed was done long years ago, my hatred for the ghost of the late king, and for his son, his widow, all his kin, is ever fresh and new. He 's dead himself, so he 's of no account. When a mere child, I swore to avenge my father on his son. I 've sought thee everywhere, Don Carlos, King of the Castiles, for there 's a deadly feud betwixt our families. Our fathers fought for thirty years, without remorse or pity. 'T is true they both are dead, but they have died in vain; their hate survives them. Peace has not come to them; their sons are living, and the

old feud goes on. Ah! so 't is thou who didst contrive these execrable nuptials! So much the better. Long have I sought for thee, and lo! thou standest in my path!

DONNA SOL.

You terrify me.

HERNANI.

Burdened with a mission of anathema, I needs must terrify myself at last. Listen. This man, whose destined bride you are, your uncle, Ruy de Silva, is Duke of Pastraña, a wealthy citizen of Aragon, and count and grandee of Castile. He can, O maiden, in default of youth, bring you such heaps of gold and jewelry and precious stones, that your fair brow will glisten among royal brows, and in respect of rank, pride, wealth and glory, it well may be that many a queen will envy his young duchess. Such is your destined husband. But I am poor, and in my infancy had but the woods to which I fled barefooted. Perchance I too once had an honorable scutcheon now stained with bloody rust; perchance I too have rights, now lost in darkness, and hidden 'neath the folds of a black gallows-cloth, but

which, if my fond expectation be fulfilled, may one day issue from this scabbard with my sword. Till that day come I have received from jealous heaven naught but air, light and water, the dowry which she gives to all alike. The time has come to rid you of the duke or of myself. Choose 'twixt us two, to marry him, or go with me.

DONNA SOL.

I 'll go with you.

HERNANI.

Among my rough companions? Outlaws, whose names the hangman knows by instinct,— fellows whose swords and hearts are never dulled, for all alike have to avenge some deed of blood, which spurs them on? You 'll come, and, as they say, command my band? For know you not that I 'm a bandit? When every man throughout all Spain was on my track, and I was wandering alone among her forests and her lofty mountains, scaling those peaks where one is all unseen save by the soaring eagle, old Catalonia, like a mother, took me to her heart. Among her mountaineers, free, poor and brave, I grew to manhood,

and should I blow a blast upon this horn to-morrow in their mountain home, three thousand of her gallant sons would come to me. You shudder. Think well on what I say. To roam with me through forests, over mountains, and where the waves roll in upon the strand, to live 'mongst men whose like you never see save as the demons of your dreams, to look on all around you with suspicion, eyes, voices, footsteps, or the slightest sound—to sleep upon the grass, drink from the rushing mountain stream, and hear at night, while holding at your breast a crying child, musket balls whistling by your ears. To be with me a wanderer and outlaw, and if need be to follow me where I shall follow him I called my father—to death upon the gallows.

DONNA SOL.

I 'll go with you.

HERNANI.

The duke is rich and great and prosperous. The duke has not to clear away a stain from his old father's name. The duke can do what pleases him. The duke together with his hand can give you titles, wealth and happiness.

DONNA SOL.

We will go hence to-morrow. Hernani, do not, I beseech you, make of my forwardness a subject of reproach. Are you my good or evil angel? That I know not, but I know that I 'm your slave. Listen. Go where you will, there I will go. There tarry, or resume your wandering, still I am yours. Why do I so? I cannot say. I need to see you, and to see you once again, and see you always. When-e'er, at parting, the music of your footsteps dies away, meseems my heart has ceased to beat: I miss you so, and am no more myself: but when the step I long to hear, the step I love, strikes on my ear, then I remember that I live, and feel my heart within my breast once more.

HERNANI (pressing her to his heart).

Angel!

DONNA SOL.

To-morrow then, at midnight. Come with your escort underneath my window. Now go; I will be brave and strong. Knock thrice upon the door.

HERNANI.

But know you who I am?

DONNA SOL.

My lord, what matters it? I go with you.

HERNANI.

No, since you choose, a helpless girl, to share my lot, 't is meet that you should know what name, what rank, what nature and what destiny are hidden in the mountaineer Hernani. You could abide a brigand, but an exile?

DON CARLOS (noisily throws open the closet door).

Pray when will you have done with your philandering? You think, mayhap, that I am comfortable in this closet?

(Hernani steps back in amazement. Donna Sol shrieks and takes refuge in his arms, gazing with startled eyes at Don Carlos.)

HERNANI (with his hand upon his sword).

Who is this man?

DONNA SOL.

O Heaven! Help!

HERNANI.

Be quiet, Donna Sol! you will awaken jealous eyes. When I am by your side,

whatever may betide, I pray you seek no other aid than mine.

(To Don Carlos.)

What were you doing here?

DON CARLOS.

I? Why, it 's very clear I was not riding through the forest.

HERNANI.

Who jokes after an insult given is in a way to give his heir cause for rejoicing.

DON CARLOS.

To each his turn! Señor, let us speak openly. You love madame and her black eyes, and come to see your own reflected in them every evening. Very good. I also love madame, and wish to know the man whom I have seen so often enter by the window, while I was left outside the door.

HERNANI.

In all respect, my lord, I 'll see to it that you go out the way I entered.

DON CARLOS.

Of that anon. I hereby tender to madame my love. Let us divide the prize. What

say you? In her pure heart I 've seen such store of love and gentleness and tender sentiment, that surely she must have enough of all of these to satisfy two lovers. This evening, wishing to bring my undertaking to an end, I gained an entrance here by stratagem, taken, I think, for you; I hid myself, and, to be frank with you, I listened. But I heard very ill, and suffocated to perfection: I found, besides, that I was crumpling up my frills like any Frenchman; and so, i' faith, I thought best to come out.

HERNANI.

My dagger also is not comfortable, and thinks best to come out.

DON CARLOS (saluting him).

That shall be as you please, señor.

HERNANI (drawing his sword).

On guard!

(Don Carlos draws his sword.)

DONNA SOL (rushing between them).

Hernani! God in heaven!

DON CARLOS.

Be calm, señora.

HERNANI (to Don Carlos).

Tell me your name.

DON CARLOS.

Eh? do you tell me yours!

HERNANI.

I keep the secret, a fatal secret, for another, who will some day, my knee upon his breast, hear my name ringing in his ear, and feel my dagger at his heart!

DON CARLOS.

What is that other's name?

HERNANI.

What is 't to thee? On guard! defend thyself!

(Their swords meet. Donna Sol sinks tremblingly upon a chair. Some one knocks at the door.)

DONNA SOL (rising again in terror).

O Heaven! there 's some one at the door!

(The combatants withdraw their swords. Josefa enters by the little door, much alarmed.)

HERNANI (to Josefa).

Who knocks?

DONNA JOSEFA (to Donna Sol).

An unexpected blow, my lady! 'T is the duke returning!

DONNA SOL (clasping her hands).

The duke! then all is lost! unhappy woman that I am!

DONNA JOSEFA (looking about).

Jesus! the stranger! and drawn swords! They 're fighting. Fine doings these!

(The two combatants sheathe their swords. Don Carlos wraps himself in his cloak and pulls his hat over his eyes. The knocking continues.)

HERNANI.

What 's to be done?

(Renewed knocking.)

A VOICE (outside).

Open, Donna Sol!

(Donna Josefa takes a step toward the door. Hernani stops her.)

HERNANI.

Nay, do not open.

DONNA JOSEFA (producing her rosary).

Blessed Saint James! O help us to come safely out of this!

(Renewed knocking.)

HERNANI (to Don Carlos, pointing to the closet).

Let us hide.

DON CARLOS.

Where? In the closet?

HERNANI.

Go you in. I 'll answer for it, that 't will hold us both.

DON CARLOS.

A thousand thanks, it 's much too wide.

HERNANI (pointing to the masked door).

Let us escape that way.

DON CARLOS.

Good-evening. For my own part, I remain.

HERNANI.

Body and blood! señor, for this you 'll answer to me!

(To Donna Sol.)

Shall I not barricade the door?

DON CARLOS (to Josefa).

Open the door.

HERNANI.

What does he say?

DON CARLOS (to Josefa, speechless with terror).

Open, I say!

(The knocking is incessant. Donna Josefa goes tremblingly to the door, and opens it.)

DONNA SOL.

I am a dead woman!

SCENE III

THE SAME: DON RUY GOMEZ DE SILVA, white hair and beard, and dressed in black. Servants with torches.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Men in my niece's chamber at this time of night! Come hither all! this is well worth a little light and noise.

(To Donna Sol.)

By St. John of Avila, I do believe, upon my soul, that here are three of us in your apartments! 'T is two too many, madame.

(To the young men.)

My gallant knights, what do you here? When we had Bernard and the Cid, those giants, not of Spain alone, but of the world, went through Castile, honoring old men, and protecting maidens. They were strong men, and found their mighty blade and shield less burdensome than you your velvet doublets. Those men showed due respect to hoary beards,

evinced their love by kneeling at the altar, were false to none, and all because the honor of their families was in their keeping. If one of them would have a wife, he chose some maid of spotless purity, and took her to himself in broad daylight, in sight of all men, with sword or lance or battle-axe in hand. As to those reptiles, who, with furtive glance, trusting to darkness to conceal their execrable schemes, purloin the honor of a wife behind her husband's back, I warrant that the Cid, the ancestor we all are proud to own, would have esteemed them viler than the dust, and that he would have brought them to their knees, and buffeted their scutcheons with the flat of his sword blade, and thus despoiled them of their false nobility! Thus would the men of old, I grieve to think, have dealt with the base churls we have with us to-day. Why are you here? To say that I am naught but an old man, fit to be made the butt of youthful gallants? You think to turn me into ridicule, to laugh at me, the soldier of Zamora? And when I pass, with my gray head, you 'd have the people laugh at me? At least 't will not be you who laugh!

HERNANI.

My lord . . .

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Silence! How now! You have the sword, the dagger and the lance, you have your hunting-parties, and your hounds and falcons, your banquets and your serenades beneath your fair one's balcony,—plumes in your hats, and silken doublets, balls, tournaments, and youth and joy, and yet, like little children, you tire of them all. At any price, you needs must have a plaything that is new. You take an old, old man. Ah! you have broken your new toy! but God grant that the fragments may fly back into your faces! Follow me!

HERNANI.

My lord duke . . .

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Follow me! I bid you follow me! Señors, think you that this is all in joke? Good lack! my house contains a priceless treasure. That treasure is the honor of a maid, a wife, the honor of a whole family; I love the maid, she is my niece, and soon is to exchange the

ring upon her finger for a wedding ring; I deem her chaste and pure, and sacred in the eyes of every man. I go abroad but for an hour, I, Ruy Gomez de Silva, and lo! in that brief space a pilferer of honor glides beneath my roof! Avaunt! go, lave your hands, ye soulless men, for with your lightest touch you soil our wives. But no. 'T is well. Go on. Have I aught else?

(He tears off his necklet.)

See, trample upon this, trample upon my Golden Fleece!

(He throws down his hat.)

Tear out my hair, and make it a vile thing! and then to-morrow you can boast throughout the city that lecherous villains in their insolent mockery did never outrage whiter hairs upon a nobler brow!

DONNA SOL.

My lord . . .

DON RUY GOMEZ (to his servants).

Ho! squires! squires! to the rescue! my axe, my dagger, my Toledo blade!

(To the young men.)

And do you follow me.

DON CARLOS (stepping forward).

Duke, there are matters of more moment to be first considered. I mean the death of Maximilian, Emperor of Germany.

(He throws aside his cloak and removes his hat from his face.)

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Do you make sport of me? Great God! the King!

DONNA SOL.

The King!

HERNANI (with kindling eyes).

The King of Spain!

DON CARLOS (with great gravity).

Yes, Carlos. In God's name, my lord duke, are you mad? My grandfather, the Emperor, is dead. I knew it not until this evening. Hither I came in person, in hot haste, to tell the news to thee, my trusty, well-beloved subject, and seek thy counsel. I came *incog.*, and under cover of the darkness, a very simple matter after all to have caused all this uproar.

(Don Ruy Gomez dismisses his people with a wave of the hand. He approaches Don Carlos, while Donna Sol eyes him with mingled wonder and alarm, and Hernani, from a corner of the stage, gazes at him with glistening eyes.)

DON RUY GOMEZ.

But why so much delay in opening the door?

DON CARLOS.

Reason enough! thou didst return with a large escort! When a state secret leads me to thy palace, my lord duke, think'st thou I come to tell it to thy whole staff of servants?

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Your Highness, I beseech you, pardon me! Appearances . . .

DON CARLOS.

My worthy father, I have made thee governor of Figuera castle; whom ought I now to name to be thy governor?

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Pardon . . .

DON CARLOS.

Enough. We 'll talk no more of it, my lord. The emperor is dead.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Your Highness' grandfather is dead?

DON CARLOS.

Thou seest, duke, that I am overborne with grief.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Who will succeed him?

DON CARLOS.

A duke of Saxony is in the lists, and François I. of France is one of his competitors.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Where do the electors of the empire assemble?

DON CARLOS.

They have made choice, I think, of Aix-la-Chapelle or Spiers or Frankfort.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Has not our king, whose life may God prolong, dreamed of the empire for himself?

DON CARLOS.

By day and night.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Then it will fall to you.

DON CARLOS.

I know it.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Your father was an Austrian arch-duke, and let us hope the empire will not forget that he, so lately fallen from the imperial purple to the cere-cloth, was your father's father.

DON CARLOS.

And then I am a citizen of Ghent.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

In my youth I once beheld your grandsire. Alas! now I alone survive of a whole generation. Now all my friends are dead. He was a most magnificent and mighty emperor.

DON CARLOS.

Rome is for me.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

This valiant, resolute, but exorable head would set well on the old Germanic body!

(He bends over the king's hands and kisses them.)

Ah! but I pity you! so young and yet so bitterly afflicted!

DON CARLOS.

The pope may in that case recover Sicily, which I now hold: an emperor may not possess that kingdom. He makes me emperor,

whereon I, like a duteous son, make over Naples to him. Give me the eagle, and we 'll see if I will sit by while he clips his pinions.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

How joyfully would he, who sat so long on the imperial throne, see his crown placed on thy majestic brow! Ah! good my liege, we weep with you in sorrow that this great and good and very Christian monarch is no more.

DON CARLOS.

The Holy Father 's very clever. "Pray, what is Sicily?"—"An island appertaining to my kingdom, a tattered, jagged fragment, which hangs to Spain but by a slender thread and drags along beside it."—"What will you do, my son, with this misshapen island hanging by a thread to your imperial possessions? Your empire is deformed, bring scissors hither quickly, and let 's lop it off!" "Most Holy Father, thanks! But, if I have good luck, I count upon restoring to the Holy Empire more than one of these same fragments; and if some few be wrested from me past recall, I 'll piece it out with islands and with duchies."

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Be comforted! there is an empire of the just, where we shall meet again with those who went before, more holy and more venerable.

DON CARLOS.

This François First is an ambitious wight! Before the emperor is in his grave, he 's casting sheep's eyes at the empire! Pray, has he not his very Christian France? 'T is a fair realm, and worth the toil of holding fast to it. My grandsire the emperor said to King Louis once upon a time: "If I were God the Father, and I had two sons, I 'd make the elder God, the younger King of France."

(To the duke.)

Thinkest thou there can be any hope for François?

DON RUY GOMEZ.

He has won many victories.

DON CARLOS.

But everything must first be changed. The golden bull forbids the election of a foreigner.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

And you, my liege, are King of Spain.

DON CARLOS.

I am a citizen of Ghent.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

His last campaign raised François to a dizzy height.

DON CARLOS.

The eagle on my crest perchance may spread his wings and fly.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Is your Grace learned in the Latin tongue?

DON CARLOS.

But slightly.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

So much the worse. The nobility of Germany love greatly to have Latin spoken to them.

DON CARLOS.

They 'll be content with a proud Spaniard; for it matters little, King Carlos' word for it, what language the voice speaks when it speaks loud and clear. I go to Flanders. It needs must be, dear Silva, that thy king return to thee an emperor. The King of France will

move all heaven and earth. I aim to be beforehand with him. I shall set out at once.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Your Grace will leave us, without purging Aragon of this new crop of bandits, who have of late been much in evidence among our mountains?

DON CARLOS.

I have given orders to the Duke of Argos to exterminate the band.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

And have you also given orders to its leader to allow his band to be exterminated?

DON CARLOS.

What 's that! who is the leader? what 's his name?

DON RUY GOMEZ.

I know it not. He 's said to be a formidable fellow.

DON CARLOS.

Nonsense! I know that at this moment he 's in hiding in Galicia, and I 'll soon bring him to his senses with a few troopers.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

The rumors then that said he was in this vicinity were false.

DON CARLOS.

False indeed! Thou 'lt give me lodging for to-night?

DON RUY GOMEZ (bowing to the ground).

Accept my thanks, my liege.

(He summons his servants.)

Come hither to do honor to the king, my guest.

(The servants return with torches. The duke arranges them in two lines reaching to the door at the back of the stage. Meanwhile Donna Sol slowly draws near Hernani. The king watches them narrowly.)

DONNA SOL (in an undertone to Hernani).

To-morrow night, at midnight, without fail, beneath my window. Clap your hands thrice.

HERNANI (in a low tone).

To-morrow.

DON CARLOS (aside).

To-morrow!

(Aloud to Donna Sol, stepping gallantly toward her.)

Deign to accept my hand to go within.

(He leads her to the door. Exit Donna Sol.)

HERNANI (with his hand in his breast upon the hilt of his dagger).

My trusty dagger!

DON CARLOS (aside).

Our man has a bewildered air.

(He takes Hernani aside.)

Señor, I have done you the honor to cross swords with you. There are a hundred reasons why I should look upon you with suspicion. But King Don Carlos abhors treachery. Begone. I 'll condescend to you once more, and cover up your flight.

DON RUY GOMEZ (pointing to Hernani).

Who is this señor?

DON CARLOS.

He goes with me. He 's of my suite.

(Exeunt with the servants and torches; the duke preceding the king, with a wax taper in his hand.)

SCENE IV

HERNANI (alone).

Yes, of thy suite, O king! Yes, of thy suite! By day and night, and step by step, I follow thee. Dagger in hand, eyes fastened on thy foot-prints, do I follow thee. In me my race pursues thy race in thee. And lo! thou art my rival! I wavered for one instant between love and hate; my heart was far too small for her and thee, and in its love for her forgot its hate for thee; but since thou 'lt have it so, and since 't is thou who dost recall it to my mind, 't is well; I will remember! My love throws its full weight into the same scale with my hatred and weighs the wavering balance down. Yes, 't was thyself didst say that I am of thy suite! No courtier at thy accursed levée, nor cringing lord, stooping to kiss thy shadow, nor majordomo, who to serve thee abjures his manliness, nor palace cur tutored to follow at thy heels, will dog thy steps more zealously

than I! For what all these Castilian grandees desire at thy hands is but an empty title, a glittering toy, a golden sheep to hang about their necks; but I 'm no fool, to set my heart upon such trifles! That which I seek from thee is no vain favor, but the heart that 's in thy body, the blood that courses through thy veins, and everything that a triumphant dagger can lay hold upon by groping long among thy bones. Go thou before, I follow. My vengeance, ever watchful, doth keep pace with me and whispers in my ear. Where'er thou goest there am I, watching and listening, and noiselessly my step seeks thine, and follows close upon it. By day, O king, thou canst not turn thy head that thou 'lt not see me standing grim and motionless beside thee; by night, O king, thou canst not turn thy eyes, that thou 'lt not see my eyes gleaming upon thee in the darkness!

(Exit through the masked door.)

ACT SECOND

THE BANDIT

SARAGOSSA

A courtyard of the Silva palace. At the left, the high walls of the palace, with a window and balcony. Below the window, a small door. At the right and at the back of the stage, streets and houses. It is dark. Some few lighted windows can be seen here and there among the buildings.

SCENE I

DON CARLOS, DON SANCHO SANCHEZ DE ZUNIGA, Count of Monterey, DON MATIAS CENTURION, Marquis of Almuñan, DON RICARDO DE ROXAS, Lord of Casapalma.

(The four come upon the stage after the curtain rises, Don Carlos at their head; their hats are pulled down over their eyes, and they are wrapped in long cloaks, the skirts of which are raised by their swords.)

DON CARLOS (scrutinizing the balcony).

There are the balcony and door—my blood is boiling.

(He points to the window, which is not lighted.)

No light as yet!

(He looks around at the other windows which are lighted.)

Lights everywhere where I would there were none,—none at that window where I would there were one.

DON SANCHO.

My liege, you say that you allowed this stranger to go free?

DON CARLOS.

'T is as thou sayest.

DON MATIAS.

Perchance he was the major of the bandits.

DON CARLOS.

I know not if he were their major or their captain, but this I know, that crownèd king ne'er bore himself more proudly.

DON SANCHO.

His name, my liege?

DON CARLOS (with his eyes fixed on the window).

Muñoz—Fernan . . .

(With a gesture, as if suddenly recollecting himself.)

A name that ends in *i*.

DON SANCHO.

Was it perchance Hernani?

DON CARLOS.

Yes.

DON SANCHO.

'T is he!

DON MATIAS.

Hernani? 'T is the leader of the bandits!

DON SANCHO (to the king).

Can you recall his words?

DON CARLOS (without removing his eyes from the window).

Damnation! I could hear nothing in their infernal closet!

DON SANCHO.

But why release him, when you had your hand on him?

DON CARLOS.

Methinks you question me, my lord of Monterey.

(The two noblemen fall back and keep silent.)

Moreover, 't is not that that holds me back. I have my eye upon his mistress, not upon his head. I 'm over head and ears in love! The

loveliest black eyes, my friends! two rays of light, two meteors, two mirrors! I could hear naught of all their colloquy but these four words: "Come at midnight to-morrow." But 't was the most essential part. Is it not capital? While our freebooter of the gallant mien delays to do some villany, or dig his victim's grave, I softly come and steal his dove away from out the nest.

DON RICARDO.

Your Grace, to make the trick more perfect you should slay the vulture when you steal the dove.

DON CARLOS.

Most excellent advice! Your wits are ever sharpened, Count.

DON RICARDO (bowing low).

By what title, please your Highness, am I count?

DON SANCHO (hastily).

'T was a mistake.

DON RICARDO (to Don Sancho).

He called me count.

DON CARLOS.

Enough! 'T is well.

(To Don Ricardo.)

I dropped the title. Do you pick it up.

DON RICARDO (bowing again).

A thousand thanks, my liege.

DON SANCHO (to Don Matias).

A pretty count! A count by accident!

(The king walks about at the back of the stage, impatiently watching the lighted windows. The two nobles talk together at the front.)

DON MATIAS (to Don Sancho).

Pray what will the king do, when once he has the fair one in his grasp?

DON SANCHO (with a sidelong glance at Ricardo).

Make her a countess, and then maid of honor. Then let him have a son by her, and he 'll be king.

DON MATIAS.

Fie, fie, my lord! a bastard! Count, were one thrice a king, one could not get a king from any countess!

DON SANCHO.

A marchioness he 'll make her then, my noble marquis.

DON MATIAS.

Bastards are destined to be viceroys over conquered countries. That is the purpose of their being.

(Don Carlos returns.)

DON CARLOS (gazing angrily at the lighted windows).

Would not one say yon windows were so many jealous eyes spying upon us? Ah! two of them are dark at last! My lords, how tedious are these hours of waiting! What can we do to make them pass more quickly?

DON SANCHO.

That 's what we often ask at the king's palace.

DON CARLOS.

Meanwhile my people are repeating it where you do dwell.

(The light disappears from the last window which has remained lighted.)

The last light is extinguished!

(He turns toward the window of Donna Sol's balcony, which is still dark.)

O cursed window! when wilt thou show a light? The night is very dark; come, Donna Sol, and shine, a bright star, in the darkness.

(To Don Ricardo.)

Is it twelve o'clock?

DON RICARDO.

It soon will be.

DON CARLOS.

'T is better to have done with it. The other may arrive at any moment.

(A light appears in Donna Sol's window. Her shadow is seen outlined against the glass.)

My friends, a beacon-light! her shadow on the window! Never was I more pleased to see the dawn of day. Let us make haste, and give the signal she awaits. Thrice we must clap our hands. A moment more, my friends, and you will see her! And yet perchance our number may alarm her. Go all of you, stand yonder in the shadow, and keep watch for the other. My friends, we 'll share between us the two lovers: to me the lady, and to you the brigand.

DON RICARDO.

Thanks, many thanks!

DON CARLOS.

When he appears, rush quickly from your ambush and have at the villain. While he 's recovering his senses on the stones, I 'll steal away the damsel and we 'll laugh together afterward. But do not kill him! when all 's said, he 's a brave fellow, and a man's death 's a serious affair.

(The three noblemen bow respectfully and go off the stage. Don Carlos watches them out of sight, then gives the signal twice. The second time the window opens and Donna Sol appears upon the balcony.)

SCENE II

DON CARLOS, DONNA SOL.

DONNA SOL (on the balcony).

Hernani, is it you?

DON CARLOS (aside).

Diablo! I had best say nothing.

(He claps his hands again.)

DONNA SOL.

I will come down.

(She closes the window and the light disappears. A moment later the little door opens and Donna Sol comes out with a lamp in her hand, and her cloak thrown over her shoulders.)

DONNA SOL.

Hernani!

(Don Carlos pulls his hat over his eyes, and rushes toward her.)

DONNA SOL (letting her lamp fall).

Just God! 't is not his step!

(She starts to return to the palace. Don Carlos runs to her side and seizes her arm.)

DON CARLOS.

Donna Sol!

DONNA SOL.

'T is not his voice! Unhappy woman that I am!

DON CARLOS.

How couldst thou wish a voice more amorous? It is a lover's, and a royal lover's!

DONNA SOL.

The king!

DON CARLOS.

Desire, command; a kingdom 's at thy feet! For he whose gentle fetters thou wouldst break is e'en the king, thy lord, Carlos, thy slave!

DONNA SOL (struggling to free herself).

Hernani! help!

DON CARLOS.

Most dignified and proper fear! 'T is not thy bandit holds thee in his grasp, but 't is the king!

DONNA SOL.

No, no! You are the bandit! Are you not ashamed? Ah! the blood rises to my

cheeks in shame for you! Of such exploits as this will the king boast? that he by force, at midnight, did abduct a helpless woman. My bandit is a hundred times the better man; I tell thee, king, that if a man were born where his place is by virtue of his qualities of soul, if God made worldly rank depend upon the heart, then he would surely be the king, and you the robber!

DON CARLOS (trying to draw her after him).

Señora . . .

DONNA SOL.

Do you forget that I am a count's daughter?

DON CARLOS.

I 'll make you duchess.

DONNA SOL (pushing him away).

Avaunt! 't is a foul shame!

(She moves away a few steps.)

There can be nothing betwixt us, Don Carlos. My father shed his blood for you in rivers. I am a noble maiden, and that jealous blood flows in my veins. My rank 's too high for concubine, too low for wife.

DON CARLOS.

But if thou wert a princess?

DONNA SOL.

King Carlos, take your love away to nameless girls, or I may prove to you that I 'm a lady and a woman too, if you dare offer me indignity!

DON CARLOS.

Then share my throne and name. Come. You shall be queen, nay, empress!

DONNA SOL.

No. 'T is but a lure. Nay, more, your Highness, to speak openly, my heart has naught to say to you. If I must speak the truth, far rather would I lead an errant life with him, my king, my own Hernani, without the pale of law and of society, hungry and thirsty, shunning pursuit throughout the livelong year, sharing from day to day his hapless destiny, forsakenness, war, exile, sorrow, poverty and terror, than reign an empress with an emperor!

DON CARLOS.

How happy is his lot!

DONNA SOL.

Happy forsooth! a beggared outlaw!

DON CARLOS.

I envy him his beggary and outlawry, for he is loved by you! I go my way alone; an angel bears him company! And so you hate me?

DONNA SOL.

Indeed, I do not love you.

DON CARLOS (seizing her roughly).

Whether you do or do not love me matters not! You 'll come with me, my hand is stronger far than yours. I say that come you must! Such is my will! By Heaven, we 'll see if I am king of Spain and of the Indies to no purpose!

DONNA SOL (struggling).

My liege! in pity's name! Reflect! you are a mighty king. Countess, or marchioness, or duchess, you have but to choose. The ladies of your court are always ready to return you love for love. But my poor outlaw—what has he received from grudging Heaven! Reflect! you have Castile, Navarre and Aragon, and Murcia and Leon, and ten kingdoms

more, and Flanders and the Indies with their stores of gold! You rule with undisputed sway an empire so vast that the sun never sets upon it! And can it be that you, who rule the world, that you, the king, would steal poor me away from him who has naught else but me?

(She throws herself at his feet. He tries to drag her away.)

DON CARLOS.

Come! I 'll not listen. If thou 'lt come with me, I 'll give thee at thy choice four of my Spanish kingdoms. Say, which four wilt thou have?

(She struggles to free herself from his arms.)

DONNA SOL.

For my honor's sake, my liege, I 'll have naught from thee but this dagger!

(She snatches the dagger from his belt. He releases her and steps back.)

Approach me if you dare! take but one step!

DON CARLOS.

Heaven save the mark! I cannot wonder that she loves a rebel.

(He steps toward her. She raises the dagger).

DONNA SOL.

One step, and I kill you, and then myself.

(He steps back again. She turns her head and calls with all the strength of her lungs.)

Hernani! Hernani!

DON CARLOS.

Hold your peace!

DONNA SOL (waving the dagger).

One step, and all is said!

DON CARLOS.

Madame! your frenzy forces me to have recourse to harsher measures. I have at hand three of my suite, who will compel compliance with my will.

HERNANI (suddenly appearing behind him).

You overlook one other of your suite!

(The king turns and sees Hernani standing like a statue in the shadow behind him, his arms folded beneath the long cloak in which he is enveloped, and with the broad brim of his hat turned back from his face. Donna Sol with a faint shriek runs to him and throws her arms about him.)

SCENE III

DON CARLOS, DONNA SOL, HERNANI.

HERNANI (without moving, his arms still folded, and his piercing eyes fixed upon the king).

Ah! Heaven is my witness that I would willingly have gone much farther to encounter him!

DONNA SOL.

Hernani! Save me from him!

HERNANI.

Never fear, my love.

DON CARLOS.

What in God's name are my people doing that they allowed this gipsy chief to pass?

(Calling.)

Monterey!

HERNANI.

Your friends are in the power of mine; so do not call for help upon their helpless swords; for three who came in answer to your call, sixty would come at mine; sixty, of whom a single one is worth all four of you.

So let us two adjust our quarrel here between ourselves. What! you have dared to lay a hand upon this maiden! It was the act of a rash man, my lord king of Castile, and of a coward!

DON CARLOS (smiling contemptuously).

Sir bandit, no hard names from you to me!

HERNANI.

He scoffs at me! Ah! I am not a king; but when a king insults me, and makes matters worse by mocking me, my anger rises high, and lifts me to his level. Beware! when I am flouted, the hot flush that sweeps across my brow is dreaded more than a king's blazonry! You are insane, if hope still lingers in your breast.

(He seizes the king's arm.)

Know you whose hand it is that holds you fast? Listen. Your father caused my father's death—I hate you. You robbed me of my title and my property—I hate you. Now we both love this woman—I hate you, yes, I hate you. With my whole heart and soul, I hate you!

DON CARLOS.

So be it.

HERNANI.

And yet to-night my hate was far away. I had but one desire, one thought, one yearning—Donna Sol! With overflowing heart I hastened hither—to find you, in the act of putting a foul outrage on her. What! you, whom I had for the nonce forgotten, stand in my path again! I tell you, you 're a madman! Don Carlos, thou art caught in thine own trap, beyond all hope of succor or escape. I have thee on the hip! Alone thou art, encompassed on all sides by bitter foes; what canst thou do?

DON CARLOS.

Go to! you question me!

HERNANI.

'T is not my will that any lowly arm should smite thee. It is not meet that so my vengeance should escape me. Thy punishment shall be dealt out to thee by none but me. Defend thyself.

(He draws his sword.)

DON CARLOS.

I am your lord and king. Strike if you will. No duel.

HERNANI.

My liege, do not forget that yesterday thy sword and mine did cross.

DON CARLOS.

'T was different yesterday. I did not know your name, nor you my rank. To-day, my friend, you do know who I am, and I know who you are.

HERNANI.

Perhaps you do.

DON CARLOS.

No duel. Murder me. Hold not thy hand.

HERNANI.

Think'st thou that kings are sacred in my sight? 'Sdeath, man, wilt thou defend thyself?

DON CARLOS.

You will assassinate me!

(Hernani recoils. Don Carlos fixes his eagle eyes upon him.)

Ah! brigands, do you think that you can overrun our cities with impunity? that you can come with blood upon your hands, and murder on your consciences, base churls, and play at magnanimity, forsooth? that we, caught in your trap, will vouchsafe to shed lustre on your daggers by offering our swords for them to strike at? No, crime 's your master. You take it with you everywhere. Duels with you! Avaunt, assassin!

(Hernani stands for some moments in deep thought, frowning darkly, and playing with the hilt of his sword: at last he turns abruptly toward the king, and breaks the blade upon the ground.)

HERNANI.

Go your way!

(The king turns partly toward him, with a haughty glance.)

We shall meet later, on more even terms. So go your way.

DON CARLOS.

'T is well, señor. It is my purpose to return within the hour to the ducal palace. There my first care will be to send instructions to the fiscal. Is there a price upon your head?

HERNANI.

There is.

DON CARLOS.

From this day forth, my master, I look upon you as a subject in rebellion and a traitor. I give you warning that I shall be on your track where'er you go. I 'll have you placed under the ban of Spain.

HERNANI.

I am already there.

DON CARLOS.

'T is well.

HERNANI.

But France is near to Spain. I 'll seek a haven there.

DON CARLOS.

I shall be chosen Emperor of Germany. I 'll have you placed under the empire's ban.

HERNANI.

As thou sayst. Even so, I have the balance of the world, wherein to bid defiance to thee. There 's more than one safe harbor which thy power does not reach.

DON CARLOS.

But what if all the world be mine?

HERNANI.

Then I shall find sure refuge in the grave.

DON CARLOS.

I shall find means to foil your shameless plots.

HERNANI.

Revenge is lame, and comes but slowly, but it comes at last.

DON CARLOS (with a disdainful laugh).

That my hand should have touched the woman whom this bandit loves!

HERNANI.

Dost thou reflect that I still have thee in my power? Do not remind me, O thou holy Roman Emperor that art to be, that thou art here, a puny mortal, in my too loyal hand, and if I close this hand upon thee, I shall crush thy imperial eaglet in the egg.

DON CARLOS.

Do thy worst.

HERNANI.

Away! away!

(He removes his cloak and throws it over Don Carlos' shoulders.)

Fly, but put on this cloak, for else I fear some knife may reach thy heart among my followers.

(The king wraps himself in the cloak.)

Now go and fear no harm. My thirsty vengeance makes thy head sacred to all others than myself.

DON CARLOS.

Mark what I say, señor, and do not you, who dare address me thus, sue at some future day for pardon or for mercy.

(Exit.)

SCENE IV

HERNANI, DONNA SOL.

DONNA SOL (grasping Hernani's hand).

Now let us fly.

HERNANI (putting her hand aside with gentle seriousness).

'T is natural to thee, my love, to be more faithful to me in misfortune, to cling to me, and to be constant in thy purpose to abide with me unto the end. It is a noble purpose, and worthy of a loyal, trusting heart. But, O my God! thou seest that 't is now too late to take so much from her, to carry with me to my den this pearl of loveliness of whom a king is jealous; too late for Donna Sol to follow me and be my own; too late to take her life and couple it with mine, and drag her down without shame and remorse: the scaffold looms too near at hand.

DONNA SOL.

What say you?

HERNANI.

This king whom I defied will punish me for having dared to spare him. He flies, perchance ere this he 's in his palace; he calls his guards and servants and retainers, his nobles and his headsmen.

DONNA SOL.

Hernani! God in heaven! I tremble for thee! Come, let us hasten! let us fly together.

HERNANI.

Together! no, not so. The hour for that is past. Alas! my own Donna Sol, when thou didst first reveal thyself to me, so fair and lovable, deigning to love me with a helpful love, I might, poor wretch, have offered thee my mountains and my forests and my rushing streams—thy pity made me bold—my outlaw's crust, and half of the green bed of moss the forest gives me; but to offer thee half of the scaffold! forgive me, Donna Sol; the scaffold is for me alone!

DONNA SOL.

And yet you promised me.

HERNANI (kneeling at her feet).

Angel! ah! at this moment, when my death mayhap is near at hand, and when the melancholy consummation of a most melancholy destiny approaches through the gloom, for all my outlawry, for all the black care brooding in my breast, for all that I was rocked in childhood in a bloody cradle, for all the gloom which hovers o'er my life, I here declare that I 'm a happy man, and enviable: for you have loved me! you have told me that you loved me! you have blessed my execrated brow!

DONNA SOL (stooping over him).

Hernani!

HERNANI.

Blest be the tender and benignant fate that tossed this flower to me on the brink of the abyss!

(He rises.)

'T is not for your ear that I say it, but for the listening ear of God in heaven.

DONNA SOL.

O, suffer me to go with you.

HERNANI.

Ah! it would be a crime to snatch the flower as I fall. No, I have breathed its perfume, and I am content. Join to another's life, the life which I have troubled for an instant. Marry the duke. I give thee back thy troth, and so return to my obscurity. Do thou be happy, and forget!

DONNA SOL.

No, I will follow thee! I claim my portion of thy shroud. I 'll be thy shadow.

HERNANI (embracing her).

Oh! let me fly alone.

(He tears himself away from her with a convulsive movement.)

DONNA SOL (sorrowfully, with clasped hands).

Hernani, thou dost fly from me! So, madwoman, you 've given him your life, only to be repulsed at last, and after all your love and all your weary waiting, you cannot even have the happiness of dying by his side!

HERNANI.

I am an exile, and an outlaw, and fatality pursues me!

DONNA SOL.

You are ungrateful.

HERNANI (returning to her side).

Ungrateful! oh! not so: I will remain. Thou 'dst have it so, and I am here. Come to my arms, oh, come! So long as thou wilt have me, I will stay. Let us forget all else, and stay.

(He leads her to a stone bench.)

Sit thou upon this stone.

(He takes his place at her feet.)

Let the pure flame of love flow from thine eyes to mine: sing me some song, as thou didst sometimes sing to me at even, thy black eyes wet with tears. Let us be happy! Let us drink, for now our cup is full; this hour is ours, and all the rest is madness. O speak to me and charm away my melancholy. Is it not sweet to love, and know that thou art loved to adoration? to be alone with thy beloved? and then how sweet to whisper of our love at night when all around is still! Oh! let me sleep and dream upon thy bosom, Donna Sol! my love! my queen of loveliness!

(Bells are heard in the distance.)

DONNA SOL (rising in alarm).

The tocsin! Dost thou hear? the tocsin!

HERNANI (still on his knees).

Oh, no! they are our wedding-bells.

(The sound of bells grows louder. Confused shouts, torches and lights at many windows, on the roofs and in the streets.)

DONNA SOL.

Rise, rise, and fly! Great God! All Saragossa is illuminated!

HERNANI (half rising).

We shall be wed by torchlight.

DONNA SOL.

Be wed by torchlight! Ah! 't will be a wedding of the dead.

(Clash of swords. Shouts.)

HERNANI (lying down upon the stone bench).

Let us to sleep.

A MOUNTAINEER (rushing upon the stage, sword in hand).

Señor, the archers and alcaldes are thronging to the square! *Alerta*, monseñor!

(Hernani rises.)

DONNA SOL (with pale cheeks).

Ah! thou saidst aright!

THE MOUNTAINEER.

Help! help!

HERNANI (to the mountaineer).

I come. 'T is well.

(Confused shouts without.)

Death to the bandit!

HERNANI (to the mountaineer).

Thy sword.

(To Donna Sol.)

Farewell!

DONNA SOL.

'T is I who have undone thee! Where goest thou?

(Points to the small door.)

Come! fly with me through yonder door.

HERNANI.

And leave my friends? Great God! what sayest thou?

(Great uproar and loud shouts.)

DONNA SOL.

This uproar tears my heart.

(She lays her hand upon Hernani's arm.)

Remember, if thou diest, I shall die.

HERNANI (straining her to his heart).

One kiss.

DONNA SOL.

My husband! my Hernani! my dear lord!

HERNANI (kissing her upon the forehead).

Alas! this is the first.

DONNA SOL.

Perchance it is the last.

(Exit Hernani. Donna Sol falls upon the bench.)

ACT THIRD

THE OLD MAN

THE CASTILLO DE SILVA,

IN THE MOUNTAINS OF ARAGON.

The gallery of portraits of the Silva family: a large apartment, of which these portraits, set in rich frames, and surmounted by ducal coronets and gilded coats of arms, form the principal decoration. At the back of the stage a high Gothic door. Between every two portraits are complete suits of armor of different periods, with the corresponding weapons

SCENE I

DONNA SOL (very pale, standing near a table), DON RUY GOMEZ DE SILVA (seated in a great oaken chair of state).

DON RUY GOMEZ.

At last the day has come! An hour hence, thou 'lt be my duchess! No more uncles then! and then thou 'lt kiss me! But hast thou pardoned me? I was at fault, I grant you. I caused thy brow to flush, thy cheek

to pale. I was too quick to be suspicious, and should not have held thee guilty without hearing thee. How easily appearances deceive, and how unjust we are! And yet those two young men were surely there! No matter. I should not believe my eyes. But what canst thou expect, my child, from an old man like me?

DONNA SOL (without moving or smiling).

You constantly refer to that. Who has reproached you?

DON RUY GOMEZ.

I myself: for I was wrong. I should have known that with a heart like thine a woman has no lovers, when she is Donna Sol, and good old Spanish blood flows in her veins.

DONNA SOL.

Surely my blood is good and pure, my lord, and that you may perchance discover soon.

DON RUY GOMEZ (rising, and walking toward her).

Listen, my child: a man 's not master of his acts when he 's in love, as I 'm in love with

thee, and old, as I am. He 's jealous and bad-tempered — why? Because he 's old. Because the sight of beauty, grace and youth in other men alarm and seem to threaten him. Because he 's mad with jealousy of other men and blushes for himself. Good lack! how utterly lame Cupid, who fills our hearts with all the fire of youth, fails at the same time to rejuvenate our bodies! When a young shepherd passes—there are young shepherds hereabout—I often say beneath my breath, as he goes his way and I mine, he singing and I dreaming, he to his verdant mead, I to my gloomy avenues:—"O my embattled towers, my old ducal donjon, how gladly would I give you all, and all my crops and forests, with the vast flocks that graze upon my hills, my ancient name and title, all my ruins, and my old ancestors who count upon my coming soon to join them, for his new hut and youthful brow!"—For black his hair, and his eye gleams like thine; and thou mayst see him, and exclaim: "O, what a handsome youth!" and after, think of me, and my gray hairs. I know it well! And yet my name is Silva, but that 's not enough! Yes, often

I repeat it to myself. See how I love thee! I would give my all to be as young and fair as thou! But, pray, what dreams are these? I, young and fair! I, who am doomed to go long years before thee to the tomb!

DONNA SOL.

Who knows?

DON RUY GOMEZ.

But still, these empty-headed gallants have no love that goes beyond mere words, believe me. If one of the young sparks wins a girl's love and trust, he laughs if she dies of a broken heart. All these young fledgelings, swift of flight upon their gaudy wings, and languishing of speech, do know no love that does not moult as surely as their feathers. But we old men, whom age has robbed of voice and youthful coloring, have hearts more true, and are more constant if we 're not so fine to look upon. We are good lovers. Are our steps heavy? Our eyes dry? Our foreheads wrinkled? At least there are no wrinkles on our hearts. Alas! when an old man loves, he must be treated tenderly. The heart is

always young, can always bleed. My love is not like a glass toy which shines and tinkles; no! 't is a stern passion, deep and strong and lasting, a father's and a husband's love combined, and staunch as my old oaken chair of state. That 's how I love thee, and I love thee in a hundred other fashions; as one loves the dawn, as one loves flowers, as one loves the thought of heaven. If I can see thee daily, thy pure brow, the gentle flame of thy proud eye, thy graceful form, I laugh for joy, and my glad heart keeps constant holiday.

DONNA SOL.

Alas!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

And more, when a man nears his end, dying by slow degrees, and stumbling at the threshold of the tomb, the world applauds to see a woman, a pure, white dove, a spotless angel, watching over him and shielding him, enduring still the presence of a helpless dotard, who 's good for nothing but to die. It is a sacred mission, and justly do men praise the noble effort of a self-sacrificing heart, which ministers unto a dying man until his day

is done, and, though she love him not, pretends to love him! Ah! thou wilt be to me the angel with a woman's heart, who dost bring joy and comfort to the poor old man, and spare him half the pain of his declining years, with filial respect, and sisterly compassion.

DONNA SOL.

It well may be, my lord, that you will follow me, rather than go before me to the tomb. That one is young is not alone sufficient cause for living. Alas! the aged often loiter on the road, the young go on before, their eyelids closing suddenly, as the stone falls again upon the open sepulchre.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

How now! what sombre words are these! I 'll chide thee, child, for this should be a joyous and a holy day. How happens it that, though the hour 's at hand, thou art not ready for the chapel? Go quickly, pray, and dress. I count the moments. Don thy wedding garb!

DONNA SOL.

There is still time.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

No.

(A page enters.)

How now, Iaquez?

THE PAGE.

My lord, there 's some one at the gate, a pilgrim, or a beggar, which you will, imploring shelter.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Whoe'er he be, good fortune enters with the stranger. Admit him. Hast thou any tidings from without, anent the bandit chief, who overruns our forests with his band of cut-throats?

THE PAGE.

It is all over with Hernani, it is all over with the lion of the mountain.

DONNA SOL (aside).

My God!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

What sayest thou?

THE PAGE.

His band is utterly destroyed. 'T is said the king in person led the descent upon them. Hernani's head is worth a thousand royal crowns this moment; but 't is said he 's dead.

DONNA SOL (aside).

Dead! and away from me, Hernani!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Thank Heaven! the rebel is no more! Now we may give our joy free rein, dear heart. So go, my love, my pride, and don thy wedding garb! This day is twice a holiday!

DONNA SOL (aside).

Oh! rather mourning garb!

(Exit.)

DON RUY GOMEZ (to the page).

Make haste and take to her the jewel-case, my wedding gift.

(He resumes his seat in his chair of state.)

I long to see her dressed like a madonna, and fair enough, by virtue of my jewels, and her own dear eyes, to bring a pilgrim to his knees. But what of him who craves our hospitality? Bid him come in, make our excuses to him, fly!

(The page bows and goes out.)

To force one's guest to wait! Ah! that 's an evil omen!

(The door at the back of the stage opens. Hernani appears, disguised as a pilgrim. The duke rises and goes to meet him.)

SCENE II

DON RUY GOMEZ, HERNANI.

(Hernani stops in the doorway.)

HERNANI.

Happiness and peace to you, my lord!

DON RUY GOMEZ (saluting him with a wave of his hand).

And happiness and peace to thee, my guest.

(Hernani comes forward. The duke resumes his seat.)

Art thou a pilgrim?

HERNANI (bowing).

Yes, my lord.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Doubtless thou comest from Armillas?

HERNANI.

No, I chose another road. There 's fighting in those parts.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

The outlaw's band?

HERNANI.

I know not.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

The chief Hernani,—knowest thou what has become of him?

HERNANI.

My lord, who is Hernani?

DON RUY GOMEZ.

What! thou dost not know him! so much the worse! the great reward is not for thee. Hernani, thou must know, is a base rebel, far too long unpunished. If thou dost go to Madrid in thy travels, thou mayest see him hanged.

HERNANI.

I go not to Madrid.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

His head belongs to him who cares to take it.

HERNANI (aside).

Let them come and try!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Good pilgrim, whither goest thou?

HERNANI.

Señor, to Saragossa.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Is 't to fulfill a vow made to some saint? to Our Lady?

HERNANI.

Yes, duke, to Our Lady.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Our Lady of the Pillar?

HERNANI.

Even so.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

That man can have no soul, who does not rigidly fulfill the vows he offers to the saints. But when thine is fulfilled, hast thou no further plan? Hast thou no wish except to see the *Pillar?*

HERNANI.

Oh! yes, I wish to see the lighted torches and the candles, to see Our Lady in her golden cope stand at the end of the dark corridor, bathed in her glowing shrine's soft light, and then retrace my steps.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

A pious wish! Thy name, my brother? I am Ruy de Silva.

HERNANI (hesitating).

My name?

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Thou mayest keep it to thyself if thou dost choose. None has the right to know it here. Dost thou seek shelter?

HERNANI.

Yes, my lord.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

I thank thee. Thou art welcome. Remain, friend, and spare naught. As for thy name, thy name 's my guest. Whoe'er thou art, 't is well! and I would welcome Satan without fear, if sent to me by God.

(The large door at the back of the stage is thrown wide open. Donna Sol enters in wedding dress. Behind her are pages and attendants, and two women carrying a velvet cushion, on which is a chased silver casket which they place upon a table: it contains a superb collection of jewels,—a duchess' coronet, necklaces, bracelets, pearls, and diamonds in reckless profusion. Hernani, speechless with wonder and dismay, gazes at Donna Sol with blazing eyes, heedless of what the duke is saying.)

SCENE III

THE SAME: DONNA SOL, PAGES, ATTENDANTS, WOMEN.

DON RUY GOMEZ (continuing).

This is my Blessed Virgin. To pray to her would bring thee happiness.

(He steps forward to meet Donna Sol, whose face is pale and stern, and offers her his hand.)

My lovely bride, come hither. What! no ring! no bridal wreath!

HERNANI (in a voice of thunder).

Who cares to earn a thousand golden crowns?

(All turn in amazement to gaze at him. He tears off his pilgrim's frock, and tramples upon it, and appears in his mountaineer's costume.)

I am Hernani!

DONNA SOL (aside, joyously).

Alive! thank Heaven!

HERNANI (to the servants).

I am the man upon whose head a price is set.

(To the duke.)

You wished to know whether my name was Perez or Diego? No, my name 's Hernani. 'T is a much nobler name, for 't is an exile's and an outlaw's. You see this head? It 's worth the whole cost of this fête of yours.

(To the servants.)

I give it to you all. You will be well repaid. Take it! Come, bind my hands and feet; bind me, I say! But no, there is no need, for I am bound already by a chain I will not break.

DONNA SOL.

Ah! wretched me!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Madness! Upon my soul, my guest is mad!

HERNANI.

Your guest 's a bandit!

DONNA SOL.

Do not listen to him!

HERNANI.

I have said what I have said.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

A thousand golden crowns! 't is a round sum, señor, and I 'm not sure of all my people.

HERNANI.

What matter? so much the better if there 's one among them who will earn it.

(To the servants.)

Come, sell me! give me up!

DON RUY GOMEZ (striving to keep him quiet).

Pray hold your peace! or they may take you at your word.

HERNANI.

'T is a fine chance, my friends! I tell you that I am Hernani, the rebel, and the outlaw!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Hold your peace!

HERNANI.

Hernani!

DONNA SOL (almost inaudibly, in his ear).

In God's name, hold thy peace!

HERNANI (half turning toward Donna Sol).

There 's marrying toward! I would be married, too! my bride awaits me.

(To the duke.)

She is less fair than yours, my lord, but no less faithful. Her name is Death!

(To the servants.)

How now! not one of you puts forth his hand?

DONNA SOL.

In pity's name!

HERNANI (to the servants).

Hernani! A thousand golden crowns!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

He is the very devil!

HERNANI (to a young servant).

Come, thou shalt win the prize! Then thou 'lt be rich, and be a man, and not a valet.

(To the other servants, who give no sign of moving.)

Why, how you tremble! Have my misfortunes reached their climax?

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Brother, by laying hand upon thy head, they jeopardize their own. Even though thou

wert Hernani, or one a thousand times more base than he, and were an empire offered for thy life, instead of paltry gold, thou art my guest, and as my guest I would defend thee, even against the king himself, for thou wert sent to me by God. Death be my lot, if aught befall one hair upon thy head!

(To Donna Sol.)

My niece, within the hour thou wilt be my wife; go to your room. I go to arm my servants and to close the gates!

(Exit Don Ruy, followed by all the attendants.)

HERNANI (gazing in despair at his empty belt).

Oh! not even a knife!

(Donna Sol, after the duke has disappeared, takes a few steps, as if to follow her women, then stops, and, as soon as they have gone out, returns to Hernani with anxious face.)

SCENE IV

HERNANI, DONNA SOL.

(Hernani is gazing indifferently, and in apparent abstraction, at the jewel casket on the table; suddenly he tosses his head and his eyes gleam.)

HERNANI.

I wish you joy. This fine array delights and fascinates me more than I can say, and I am lost in admiration!

(He walks up to the table.)

The ring is in good taste—and so 's the coronet,—the necklace is of finest workmanship, the bracelet of rare beauty, but far, far, yes, a hundred thousand times less beautiful, than is the woman who conceals a treacherous heart beneath so pure a brow!

(He examines the casket more closely.)

And what have you to give for all of this? a little of your love? but, in good sooth, that counts for nothing! Great God! to be so treacherous, to have no shame for it, and still to live! But after all, perhaps these are false pearls, copper instead of gold, disloyal

diamonds, false sapphires and false rubies, glass and lead! Ah! if 't is so, thy heart 's as false as all these gew-gaws, duchess, and thou art naught but tinsel!

(He returns to the casket.)

But, no, no! All is true and beautiful and honest! He, who has one foot in the grave, would not dare to deceive. Nothing is lacking.

(He takes up all the different articles in the casket, one after another.)

Necklets, diamonds, earrings, a duchess' coronet, a golden ring, 't is wonderful! I thank thee in the name of faithful, deep and lasting love! Truly a precious casket!

DONNA SOL (goes to the casket, feels about inside, and takes out a dagger).

You do not see the whole! This is the dagger, which, aided by my patron saint, I wrested from King Carlos, when he offered me a throne, which I refused for you, who now heap insults on me!

HERNANI (falling at her feet).

Oh! here upon my knees, I pray thee, let me wipe away those bitter, fascinating tears

from thy grief-laden eyes, and afterward thou wilt accept my blood to pay for them!

DONNA SOL (deeply moved).

Hernani! I love you and forgive you; I have no feeling in my heart save love for you.

HERNANI.

She has forgiven me, and loves me still! Ah! who can make it possible for me, after what I have said, to love and to forgive myself? Thou angel, set apart to dwell in heaven, I fain would know where thou hast walked, that I might kiss the ground!

DONNA SOL.

Dear love!

HERNANI.

I should be hateful in thy sight! But, listen: say to me: I love thee! Oh! toss a grain of comfort to a doubting heart, and tell me that thou lovest me! for many times those few words from a woman's mouth have cured a world of ills.

DONNA SOL (abstractedly, without hearing what he is saying).

And he could think that my love had so short a memory! that all these men of no

renown could influence a heart which once had heard his name to stoop at their behest to other lovers, though more nobly born!

HERNANI.

Alas! I have blasphemed! If I were in thy place, my Donna Sol, I should have had my fill of him ere this. I should have wearied of the raving lunatic, the dark-browed madman, who inflicts a cruel wound, and only then bethinks him to caress thee. I 'd say to him: "Begone!" Oh! turn thy back upon me, and I 'll bless thee still, for thou art kind and sweet, for thou hast borne with me too long, for I am soured, and should cast a blight upon thy life with my black humors; for 't is, in fine, too much to ask of thee. Thy heart is pure and lovely, and is it thy fault if I 'm a villain? Marry the old duke! he is kind-hearted, and of noble birth; he has Olmedo from his mother, and from his father Alcala. Again I say, seek wealth with him, be happy! And for myself, dost know what gift this generous hand can offer thee? a dowry of affliction. Thou mayest choose 'twixt blood and tears. Chains, exile, death,

the terror that surrounds me, are thy gold necklace, and thy beauteous coronet; and never did proud bridegroom bestow upon his bride a richer store of misery and sorrow. Marry the old man, I say, for he deserves thy hand. Ah! who would ever think that my proscribed head could mate with thy pure brow? Who, looking upon us two, thou calm and beautiful, I desperate and rash,—thou growing peacefully to womanhood, like a fair flower in the shade, I tempest-tossed amid reefs without number,—would say that our fates were governed by one law? No, God, who does all things well, did not make thee for me. I have no claim derived from him upon thee, and I bow my head; I have thy heart, but 't was a theft, and I restore it now to him who is more worthy of it. Heaven never smiled upon our love. If I said that thy destiny was linked with mine, I lied. And now, farewell to love and vengeance! My day draws near its close. Useless henceforth on earth, I go my way, and take with me my twofold dream, ashamed that I have been alike unable to punish and to charm: alas! that I, who can do naught but love,

should have no duty but to hate! Forgive me! fly from me! such are my prayers to thee; do not refuse them, for they are the last. Thou livest, I am dead; I cannot see why thou shouldst be laid in the tomb with me.

DONNA SOL.

Ungrateful!

HERNANI.

Mountains of Aragon! Galicia! Estremadura! Woe 's me! I bring ill luck to all about me! Your noblest sons remorselessly I 've taken to battle for my rights, and now they all are dead! They were the bravest hearts in all brave-hearted Spain. And they are dead! they all did fall amid the mountains, and upon their backs, as brave men should, in sight of God, and if their eyes should open, they would see the azure sky. Such is the fate of all who marry me! Is it a destiny that should arouse thy envy? Take the duke, Donna Sol, take hell itself, or take the king! and thou 'lt do well. Whoever is not I, is better far than I! I have not one friend who remembers me, but all abandon me: 't is time that thy turn too should come at last, for I am

destined to be left alone. Shun the contagion of my touch. Do not make a religion of thy love. Oh! fly, in pity for thyself! Perchance thou deemest me a man like other men, intelligent, and one who goes straight to the goal he dreams of. Undeceive thyself. I am a force that is a force no longer, a deaf and sightless instrument of ghastly mysteries, a hell-begotten demon of misfortune! Whither I go, I know not. But I can feel the impulse of the fiery breath of an insensate destiny. Down, down I go, and never pause. If ever and anon, gasping for breath, I dare to turn my head, a voice bids me move on: and the abyss is deep, and I can see a red light at the bottom, as of flames or blood! Meanwhile, whatever lies along my frantic course is crushed and dying. Woe to the man who touches me! Oh! fly! turn from my fatal path, or else, God help me! I shall do thee harm against my will!

DONNA SOL.

Great God!

HERNANI.

A demon to be feared is mine, I promise thee. To bring me happiness, that is the only

prodigy that lies beyond his power to accomplish. And thou art happiness! Therefore thou 'rt not for me, so seek another lover. If heaven should ever smile upon my lot, which it disowns—but do not think of it! 't would be the irony of fate. Espouse the duke!

DONNA SOL.

It seems that it was not enough that you should rend my heart, you needs must break it! Ah! you no longer love me!

HERNANI.

Thou art my very heart and soul! thou art the glowing hearthstone, from whence cometh all my warmth! O blame me not, adored one, that I fly from thee!

DONNA SOL.

I blame you not. But I shall die.

HERNANI.

Die! and for whom? for me? O can it be that thou wilt die for such a paltry thing?

DONNA SOL (bursting into tears).

It is the truth.

(She falls into a chair.)

HERNANI (sitting down beside her).

Oh! thou dost weep! Again it is my fault! and who will punish me? For thou again wilt pardon me. Who will say to thee how bitterly I suffer when a tear extinguishes the fire of thy eyes, whose brightness is my joy? Oh! all my friends are dead, and I am mad! Forgive me. I fain would love but know not how. And yet, alas! I do love with a fervent passion! Nay, do not weep! O rather let us die! Why have I not a world? I 'd give it thee. I am a most unhappy man!

DONNA SOL (throwing her arms about his neck).

You are my lion, chivalrous and proud! I love you.

HERNANI.

O, love would be the greatest of all blessings, if one could die of having loved too well.

DONNA SOL.

I love you! My dear lord, I love you, and am yours forever.

HERNANI (letting his head fall upon her shoulder).

How sweet a dagger-thrust from thee would be to me!

DONNA SOL (imploringly).

Oh! are you not afraid that God will punish you for speaking in such wise?

HERNANI (still reclining upon her breast).

Ah well! let Him unite us! Thou wouldst have it so. So be it!—I have resisted.

(They are gazing into each other's eyes in ecstasy, locked in each other's arms, blind and deaf to everything. Don Ruy Gomez enters through the door at the back. He sees them and stops upon the threshold, as if turned to stone.)

SCENE V

HERNANI, DONNA SOL, DON RUY GOMEZ.

DON RUY GOMEZ (standing motionless with folded arms upon the threshold).

Thus you requite my hospitality!

DONNA SOL.

O God in heaven, the duke!

(They both turn about, as if suddenly awakened from sleep.)

DON RUY GOMEZ.

And thus my guest, you pay the price of your accommodation? "Good my lord, see if thy walls are high, and if thy gate is well secured, the archer in his tower; go make the circuit of thy castle once and again, seek in thy arsenal a breastplate fitted to thy form, and don the panoply of war at sixty years! Behold the loyalty with which we pay for thy good faith! Thou doest that for us, and we do this for thee!" Ye saints in

heaven! I have lived sixty years and more, I have seen many bandits with unbridled passions, and oft, when I have drawn my dagger from its sheath, have raised upon my path game for the hangman; I have seen murderers and counterfeiters, traitors, and faithless servants poisoning their masters as they sat at table, and I have seen them die uncomforted by crucifix or pater! I have seen Borgia and Sforza, as I see Luther in these days, but never have I seen a villain so perverse that he 'd not fear God's thunderbolts, should he betray his host! Such villany in my day was unknown. Treason so black turns an old man to stone on his own doorsill, and gives him, even before death comes upon him, the aspect of a statue made to adorn his tomb. Moors and Castilians! What man is this?

(He raises his eyes, and glances along the rows of portraits on the walls.)

O all ye Silvas, who do hear my voice, I pray you pardon me if in my wrath I said that hospitality 's an unwise counselor.

HERNANI (rising).

Duke.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Hold thy peace!

(He walks slowly into the room a few steps, and looks up again at the portraits.)

O sacred dead! my ancestors! ye men of iron, who see what comes from heaven, what from hell, tell me, my lords, what man is this? Such as he are called Judas, not Hernani. O, try to speak, and tell me what 's his name!

(Folding his arms.)

Did ye, in your lives, ever see the like? No, no!

HERNANI.

My lord duke . . .

DON RUY GOMEZ (still addressing the portrait).

D' ye see? the perjured wretch would speak! But you can read his heart more readily than I. Oh! do not listen to him! He 's a knave! Doubtless he fancies that my arm will ere long stain my roof-tree with his blood, and that my heart in its tempestuous wrath may hatch some scheme of vengeance, meet twin-sister the feast of Seven Heads;[1] and he will tell you he 's an outlaw, he 'll tell you that the name of Silva will be writ beside the name

of Lara, then he 'll say that he 's my guest, and then that he 's your guest. My ancestors, my noble kinsmen, I do beseech you, say if mine 's the blame! Judge ye between us.

HERNANI.

Ruy Gomez de Silva, if ever on this earth a noble brow was turned toward heaven, if ever heart was great, if ever soul sublime, that brow and heart and soul are yours, my lord! are thine, my host! I who now speak to thee am guilty, and have naught to say, except that I am damned beyond redemption. Yes, I have sought to take thy wife from thee and to defile thy bed, and 't is rank infamy! There 's blood within my veins. Thou wouldst do well to shed it, and then wipe thy sword, and think no more on 't.

DONNA SOL.

My lord, it is not he! Let thy wrath fall on me alone!

HERNANI.

Be quiet, Donna Sol. For this is the last hour. This hour is mine, I have no more beyond. So let me set the matter right in the duke's mind. My lord, give faith to these, the

last words from my mouth; I swear that I am culpable, but fear not, she is pure! That 's the whole story. I culpable, she pure: for her, renewal of thy faith, a sword or dagger-thrust for me: and all is said. Then throw the corpse outside the gate, and have the floor washed, if thou wilt, it matters not.

DONNA SOL.

Ah, no! I only am to blame. For I love him.

(At the last words Don Ruy turns about with a start and fixes a terrible gaze upon her. She throws herself at his feet.)

Yes, monseñor, forgive me! I do love him.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

You love him!

(To Hernani.)

Tremble then!

(Blare of trumpets without. The page enters.)

(To the page.)

What is this noise?

THE PAGE.

The king, my lord, is at the gate, in person, with a great force of archers, and a trumpeter.

DONNA SOL.

O God! the king! This is the end!

THE PAGE (to the duke).

He seeks to know why 't is the gate is closed, and bids us open it.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Open to the king.

(The page bows and exit.)

DONNA SOL.

He 's lost!

(Don Ruy goes to one of the pictures which is a portrait of himself, the last on the left; he presses a spring and the portrait swings open like a door, disclosing a hiding place in the wall. He turns to Hernani.)

DON RUY GOMEZ.

This way, señor.

HERNANI.

My head is thine. Pray, give it up, my lord. I hold it at thy service. I am thy prisoner.

(He enters the hiding place. Don Ruy presses the spring once more, and the portrait returns to its place.)

DONNA SOL (to the duke).

My lord, I crave thy pity for him.

THE PAGE (entering).

His grace, the King.

(Donna Sol hastily lowers her veil. The door is thrown wide open. Enters Don Carlos in armor, followed by a large number of gentlemen also in armor, and by halberdiers, arquebusiers and cross-bowmen).

SCENE VI

DON RUY GOMEZ, DONNA SOL, closely veiled, DON CARLOS and his retinue.

(Don Carlos comes forward slowly, his left hand on his sword hilt, and his right hand in his breast; he gazes at the duke with a suspicious and wrathful expression. The duke goes to meet him and bows low.—Silence.—General suspense and alarm. At last the king, having come face to face with the duke, stops and throws up his head.)

DON CARLOS.

Prithee, how happens it, my cousin, that thy gate is so securely locked and barred to-day? By all the saints! I thought thy dagger was more rusty, and I knew not that 't would be in such great haste to glitter in thy hand, when we should visit thee.

(Don Ruy Gomez essays to speak, but the king continues with an imperious gesture.)

It is perhaps a little late to play the youth! Do we wear turbans? Can it be that my name 's Babodil or Mahomet, not Carlos,

that we should find your drawbridge high in air, and your portcullis lowered ?

DON RUY GOMEZ (bowing low).

My liege . . .

DON CARLOS (to his gentlemen).

Seize the keys ! Place guards at all the doors !

(Two officers go out. Several others arrange the soldiers in triple lines from the king to the great door. Don Carlos turns to the duke.)

And so you stir to life extinct rebellions ? God's death ! if you assume such airs with me, my noble dukes, why I 'll assume my kingliest air with you, and go throughout the mountains, with my mailed hands, to slay your lordships in your battlemented nests !

DON RUY GOMEZ (drawing himself up).

Your Grace, the Silvas are your loyal . . .

DON CARLOS (interrupting).

Answer me, duke, without equivocation, or I will pull your eleven towers down about your ears ! A spark remains of the extinguished conflagration, a chief of the dead bandits.

Who is hiding him? Thou art! This poisoner and rebel, this Hernani, is in thy castle: thou dost shelter him!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

My liege, 't is true.

DON CARLOS.

'T is well. I wish his head—or thine. Dost hear, my cousin?

DON RUY GOMEZ (bowing).

Let not that vex you. You shall be content.

(Donna Sol buries her face in her hands, and falls upon a chair.)

DON CARLOS (with less harshness of tone and manner).

Ah! thou dost mend thy ways. Go bring my prisoner.

(The duke folds his arms, bends his head, and stands for some moments in deep thought. The king and Donna Sol watch him in silence, agitated by widely different emotions. At last the duke raises his head, goes to the king, takes him by the hand, and leads him slowly up to the most ancient of the portraits, the first on the right.)

DON RUY GOMEZ (pointing to the old portrait).

This is the oldest of the Silvas, the common ancestor, the great man of them all, Don Silvius, thrice consul he at Rome.

(Passing to the next portrait.)

This is Don Galceran de Silva, a second Cid! There is at Toro, near Valladolid, a golden shrine, wherein a thousand candles burn for him. 'T was he freed Leon from the tribute of the hundred virgins.[2]

(Passing to another.)

Don Blas—who of his own free will, to witness his good faith, went into banishment for having ill-advised the king.

(To another.)

Don Christoval.—During the fight at Escalona—the king, Don Sancho, was unhorsed, and as he fled his white plume was the target for a storm of blows: "Don Christoval!" he cried, and Christoval gave him his horse and took the plume himself.

(To another.)

Don Jorge, who paid the ransom of Ramiro, King of Aragon.

DON CARLOS (folding his arms, and scrutinizing him from head to foot).

By Heaven! Don Ruy, I do marvel at you! Go on.

DON RUY GOMEZ (passing to another).

Ruy Gomez de Silva, grand master of Saint James and Calatrava. His gigantic armor would fit our forms but ill. He took three hundred flags, won thirty battles, conquered for king Motril, Suez, Nijar and Antequera, and died in penury. My liege, salute him.

(He bows with uncovered head and passes on to another portrait. The king listens to him with growing wrath and impatience.)

This, by his side, is Gil, his son, dear to all loyal hearts. His word was good as any king's.

(Passing to another.)

Don Gaspard, the honor of the race of Silva and Mendoza. My liege, the Silvas are connected in some way with every noble family in Spain. Sandoval one day fears us, and the next contracts a marriage with us. Manrico envies us, Lara is jealous of our eminence, and Alencastra hates us. Thus while our feet are down among the dukes, our heads keep company with kings.

DON CARLOS.

Do you mock at us?

DON RUY GOMEZ (passing on to other portraits).

This is Don Vasquez, called the Wise, and this Don Jayme, the Strong. One day he, with his

single arm, held Zamet and a hundred Moors at bay. I pass him by, and better men than he.

(At an angry gesture from the king he passes a great number of pictures, until he comes to the last three at the spectator's left.)

This is my noble grandsire. He lived full sixty years, keeping his plighted word, even to the Jews. (Passing to the last but one.)

And this old man, this consecrated head, is my own father. He too was great, although the last in order. The Moors had taken prisoner Count Alvar Giron, his good friend. My father took six hundred valiant men to go in search of him; he caused a simulacrum of Count Alvar Giron to be hewn from stone, and took it in his train, and by his patron saint he swore that he would not turn back until the granite count should of himself retrace his steps. He fought his way to his friend's side, and rescued him.

DON CARLOS.

Give me my prisoner!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

He was a true Gomez de Silva. Now they, who gaze upon these heroes hanging on these walls, are wont to say . . .

DON CARLOS.

My prisoner, instantly!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

(He bows to the ground before the king, takes him by the hand, and leads him in front of the last portrait, which serves the purpose of a door to the hiding place in which Hernani is concealed. Donna Sol follows his movements with anxious eyes. Profound silence on the part of those present, who are listening in painful suspense.)

This portrait is my own. I thank thee, King Don Carlos! for you would have them say, who look upon it: "This last, a worthy scion of a noble race, became a traitor, and did take a price for his guest's head!"

(Joy of Donna Sol. General stupefaction among the spectators. The king, taken aback, strides angrily away, then stands silent for a few moments, with trembling lips and flashing eyes.)

DON CARLOS.

Thy castle is an eyesore to me, duke, I 'll raze it to the ground!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

In that case you shall pay for it, your Grace!

DON CARLOS.

Duke, for thine insolence, I 'll raze thy towers, and sow hemp where they stand.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Better to see hemp growing where my towers stand, than that a stain should rest upon the ancient name of Silva.

(To the portraits.)

Say, all of you, am I not right?

DON CARLOS.

Duke, that man's head belongs to us, and thou didst promise us . . .

DON RUY GOMEZ.

One or the other.

(To the portraits.)

Say, all of you, did I not so?

(Pointing to his own head.)

I give you this one. Take it.

DON CARLOS.

No, duke, it cannot be. Ten thousand thanks, but I lose by the change. The head that I must have is young, and one that can be taken by the hair when it is dead. But thine? God save the mark! the executioner would seek in vain to take it by the hair, for there is not enough to fill the hand.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Jeer not, your Grace! my head is handsome still, and worth, I trow, as much as any rebel's. A Silva's head, and you are not content!

DON CARLOS.

Give up Hernani!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

In good sooth, my liege, I have said all I have to say.

DON CARLOS (to his retainers).

Search everywhere! in every tower, wing and cellar.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

My donjon is as loyal as myself; alone it shares my secret. We will keep it faithfully.

DON CARLOS.

I am thy king.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Unless my castle be demolished, stone by stone, and thus become my tomb, thou wilt find nothing.

DON CARLOS.

Prayer and threat alike are vain! Give me the bandit, or thy head and castle are no more.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

I have said.

DON CARLOS.

'T is well! instead of one head, I 'll have two.

(To the Duke of Alcala.)

Arrest the duke, Jorge.

DONNA SOL (tearing off her veil, and throwing herself between the king, the duke, and the guards.)

O King Don Carlos, you 're a wicked king!

DON CARLOS.

Great God! Can I believe my eyes? 'T is Donna Sol!

DONNA SOL.

Thou hast not the true Spanish heart, your Grace.

DON CARLOS (perplexed).

Your judgment of the king is most severe.

(He approaches Donna Sol, and speaks in an undertone.)

'T was you who sowed this anger in my heart. A man on meeting you becomes an

angel or a monster. Ah! when a man is hated, how quickly he is changed into a villain! If it had been thy will, O maiden, I might be the Lion of Castile, for I was strong and tall. You made of me a tiger with your wrath, and when the tiger roars, do you be silent!

(Donna Sol meets his eye. He bows.)

I will obey, however.

(Turning to the duke.)

Good cousin, I do much esteem thee. Thy scruples after all may be but just. Be faithful to thy guest, unfaithful to thy king: 't is well, I pardon thee, and am more kind than thou. I simply take thy niece with me as hostage.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Simply!

DONNA SOL (in dismay).

Take me, my liege!

DON CARLOS.

Yes, you.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

No more than that! O sublime clemency! O generous conqueror, to spare the head, and lacerate the heart! Pardon, forsooth!

DON CARLOS.

Choose. Donna Sol or else the traitor. One of the two I needs must have.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

You are the master!

(Don Carlos approaches Donna Sol to take her hand. She runs to Don Ruy.)

DONNA SOL.

Save me, my lord!

(She stops.)

(Aside.)

Ah! woe is me! I must accept my fate. My uncle's head or his! Better my own!

(To the king.)

I 'll follow you.

DON CARLOS.

By all the saints! a happy inspiration! Thy heart must needs grow soft at last, my child.

(Donna Sol walks with firm and measured step to the casket containing the jewels, opens it and takes out the dagger which she conceals in her bosom. Don Carlos goes to her side and offers her his hand.)

DON CARLOS (to Donna Sol).

What took you from the casket?

DONNA SOL.

Nothing.

DON CARLOS.

Some trinket that you treasure?

DONNA SOL.

Yes, my liege.

DON CARLOS (smiling).

Pray show it me.

DONNA SOL.

Oh! you shall see it.

(She gives him her hand as if to go with him. Don Ruy, who has thus far stood in the same spot, absorbed in thought, turns, and takes two or three steps toward them.)

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Donna Sol! God help me! Donna Sol! Since this man has no bowels of compassion, come to my aid! crumble, ye walls!

(He runs to the king.)

Leave me my child! I 've naught but her, my king!

DON CARLOS (releasing Donna Sol's hand).

Give me my prisoner then.

(The duke hangs his head, and seems to be in terrible perplexity; then he raises his head again, and gazes up at the portraits, with clasped hands.)

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Have pity on me, O my ancestors!

(He takes a step toward the hiding place: Donna Sol anxiously follows him with her eyes. He turns again to the portraits.)

Oh! turn your eyes away! Your glance arrests my steps.

(He walks unsteadily toward his own portrait, then turns again to the king.)

Is it thy will?

DON CARLOS.

It is.

(The duke tremblingly raises his hand toward the spring.)

DONNA SOL.

O God!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

I cannot!

(He throws himself at the king's feet.)

O take my head, for pity's sake!

DON CARLOS.

Thy niece!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Take her! leave me my honor!

DON CARLOS (seizing the hand of the trembling Donna Sol).

Farewell, duke.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Until we meet again!

(He keeps his eye upon the king as he slowly withdraws with Donna Sol: then puts his hand to his dagger.)

My liege, God have you in his keeping!

(He returns to the front of the stage, gasping for breath, oblivious to everything about him, his eyes staring into vacancy, and his arms folded across his chest, rising and falling with its convulsive heaving. Meanwhile the king goes off the stage with Donna Sol, followed by his whole suite, who walk two by two, in the order of their rank, all with serious faces, and talking with one another in undertones.)

DON RUY GOMEZ (aside).

O king, as thou dost joyously take leave of my abode, my old and well-tried loyalty takes leave of my grief-stricken heart.

(He raises his eyes, looks around, and sees that he is alone. He runs to the wall, takes down two swords, measures them, then lays them on a table. That done, he goes to the portrait, and presses the spring; the concealed door opens.)

SCENE VII

DON RUY GOMEZ, HERNANI.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Come forth.

(Hernani appears in the doorway. Don Ruy points to the swords upon the table.)

Now, choose. Don Carlos is no longer 'neath my roof, and thou must give me satisfaction. Choose. Let us have done with it. How now! thy hand is trembling!

HERNANI.

A duel! Old man, we cannot fight together.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Why not, I pray to know? Art thou afraid? Art thou not nobly born? Damnation! every man who doth insult me, noble or not, is gentleman enough to cross his sword with mine.

HERNANI.

Old man . . .

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Come on, and make an end of me or die thyself, young man.

HERNANI.

Die, yes. You saved me in despite of all my wishes. And so my life is yours. Take it.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Thou dost wish it?

(To the portraits.)

He wishes it, you see.

(To Hernani.)

'T is well. So say thy prayers.

HERNANI.

Good my lord, I offer my last prayer to thee.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Pray to the other Lord.

HERNANI.

No, no, to thee! Smite me, old man. The weapon matters not, dagger or sword, it 's all the same to me. But oh! in pity's name, I pray thee grant me one last taste of bliss! Duke, let me see her once before I die.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

See her!

HERNANI.

At least thou 'lt let me hear her voice once more for the last time! once more!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Hear her voice!

HERNANI.

Oh! I can understand thy jealousy, my lord. But death already has his grasp upon my youth, so thou wilt pardon me. Tell me, wouldst thou prefer that I should hear her without seeing her? let it be so, and I will die this evening. My heart's desire will be gratified if I may hear her. But oh! how gladly I would breathe my life away, if thou wouldst deign, before I start upon my journey to the sky, to give thy sanction that my heart once more might see her heart as mirrored in her eyes! I would not say a word. Thou wouldst be there, my father, and could take me afterward.

DON RUY GOMEZ (pointing to the open hiding place).

Saints in heaven! pray, is that den so deep and dark, and deaf that he heard nothing?

HERNANI.

I heard not a word.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

I was compelled to give up Donna Sol to him, or else thyself.

HERNANI.

To whom?

DON RUY GOMEZ.

The king.

HERNANI.

Insane old man! he loves her.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Loves her!

HERNANI.

He has stolen her from us! he is our rival!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

O malediction! To horse! to horse! my vassals! and pursue the ravisher.

HERNANI.

Hark ye. Vengeance that 's surer of its footing makes less noise *en route*. I am thy property, and thou canst cause me to be put to death. But wilt thou not employ me to avenge thy niece's virtue and thy niece herself, and thus give me my share in thy revenge? Grant me this boon, and if I must, in payment for it, kiss thy feet, I 'll gladly kiss them. Let us pursue the king together. Come, I 'll be thy arm, and I 'll avenge thee, duke. Then, thou canst kill me.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Wilt thou then be as resigned as now?

HERNANI.

Yes, duke.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Thou 'lt swear it?

HERNANI.

Yes, by my father's head.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

But wilt thou of thine own accord remember it hereafter?

HERNANI (handing him the horn which hangs at his belt).

Take this horn. Come what, come may, when 't is thy wish, my lord, whatever be the place or time, that I should die, whenever thou dost think the time has come, then blow this horn and take no other step. Thy wish will be fulfilled.

DON RUY GOMEZ (offering his hand).

Thy hand.

(They press each other's hands.)

(To the portraits.)

Be ye my witnesses.

ACT FOURTH

THE TOMB

AIX-LA-CHAPELLE

The crypt containing the tomb of Charlemagne at Aix-la-Chapelle. Great arches after the Lombard style. Large semicircular pillars, with capitals of birds and flowers. At the right, the tomb of Charlemagne, with a low bronze door with circular top. A single lamp, suspended from the keystone of one of the arches, sheds light upon the inscription; KAROLVS MAGNVS: It is dark. The extremity of the crypt cannot be seen; arches, staircases and pillars are mingled in such a way that the eye loses itself among them.

SCENE I

DON CARLOS, DON RICARDO DE ROXAS, COUNT OF CASAPALMA, with a lantern in his hand. Both are wrapped in ample cloaks, and have their hats pulled down over their eyes.

DON RICARDO (removing his hat).

This is the place.

DON CARLOS.

'T is here the league assembles! here I shall have them all together at my mercy!

Aha! my worshipful elector of Triers, this is the place! You loan this spot to them! In truth, 't is marvelous well chosen; a black conspiracy must flourish in the air of catacombs. It is most fitting that stilettoes should be sharpened upon tombstones. But you are playing a bold game, and your heads are the stakes, messieurs assassins! We shall see. Upon my soul! they 're well advised to choose a sepulchre for rendezvous,—they 'll have less far to travel.

(To Don Ricardo.)

Do these vaults extend far underground?

DON RICARDO.

To the citadel.

DON CARLOS.

That 's more than far enough for our purpose.

DON RICARDO.

Others, in this direction, reach to the monastery of Altenheim.

DON CARLOS.

Where Rudolph did exterminate Lothar. 'T is well. Repeat once more their names and grievances,—where, how and why.

DON RICARDO.

Gotha.

DON CARLOS.

I know why the brave duke conspires. He fain would see a German out of Germany elected emperor.

DON RICARDO.

Hohenbourg.

DON CARLOS.

Hohenbourg would much prefer, I do believe, to abide in hell with François than in heaven with me.

DON RICARDO.

Gil Tellez Giron.

DON CARLOS.

Castile and Nôtre Dame! So he conspires against his king, the villain!

DON RICARDO.

'T is said that he found you with Madame Giron one evening after you made him a baron. He aims to avenge the honor of his loving spouse.

DON CARLOS.

And therefore joins this cabal against Spain. What others are concerned?

DON RICARDO.

The name of the Right Reverend Vasquez, Bishop of Avila, is mentioned with the others.

DON CARLOS.

Is it his object also to avenge the virtue of his wife?

DON RICARDO.

Guzman de Lara, too,—a malcontent, who aspires to wear the collar of your order.

DON CARLOS.

Aha! Guzman de Lara! if he wants nothing but a collar, he shall have it.

DON RICARDO.

The Duke of Lutzelbourg. As to the plans that are ascribed to him . . .

DON CARLOS.

His head has grown too large.

DON RICARDO.

Juan de Haro, who would fain possess Astorga.

DON CARLOS.

The hangman's fee has always to be doubled for those Haros.

DON RICARDO.

Those are all.

DON CARLOS.

The heads I count for mine are not all there. You named but seven, and that 's not my reckoning.

DON RICARDO.

Ah! yes, I did not mention certain bandits, hired by Triers or France.

DON CARLOS.

Men without prejudices they, whose daggers, always ready for the fray, turn to the largest heap of florins, as the needle to the pole.

DON RICARDO.

I did, however, take especial notice of two bold companions, new-comers both: one young, the other old.

DON CARLOS.

Their names?

(Don Ricardo shrugs his shoulders, to signify his ignorance.)

Their ages?

DON RICARDO.

The younger about twenty.

DON CARLOS.

More 's the pity.

DON RICARDO.

The older, sixty, if not more.

DON CARLOS.

The one has not yet reached a useful age, the other has outlived his usefulness. No matter. I 'll take heed to them. The executioner may count upon my help at need. Ah! so far is it from my purpose, count, to temporize with faction, that when his axe is dull, I 'll loan my sword to him, and if need be, I 'll sew my imperial purple to the scaffold cloth to make it larger. But shall I be emperor?

DON RICARDO.

The college is in session and deliberating at this hour.

DON CARLOS.

Which will it be? Will they make choice of François First, or of their Saxon, Frederick

the Wise? Ah! Luther is right, and everything goes wrong. Fine artificers they of consecrated royalties, who have no ear for reasons that are not gold-coated! A Saxon heretic! an imbecile Elector Palatine! a dissolute Elector of Triers!—Bohemia is in my interest.—Princes of Hesse, smaller than their provinces! Young idiots and gray-haired libertines! Crowns, beyond doubt, but heads within them! Find them, if you can. Dwarfs, whom I could, like Hercules, carry away within my lion's skin, O most preposterous council! and who, divested of the violet mantle, would have less head than Triboulet! I lack three votes, Ricardo, and thereby lack everything! Oh! I would give Toledo, Ghent and Salamanca, dear Ricardo, or such three cities as the owners of three votes should choose, if they would cast them for me. Yes, for those votes, thou seest, I would give three cities in Castile or Flanders!—saving the right to take them back again.

(Don Ricardo bows very low, and puts his hat on his head.)

How 's this? You don your hat?

DON RICARDO.

My liege, you called me "thou,"

(Bowing again)

and I am henceforth a grandee of Spain.

DON CARLOS (aside).

Oh! how I pity thee, grasper at vain shadows! Oh! selfish crew! How heedlessly they follow their own thoughts with no regard for us! as if the world were but a farm-yard, where the king should stand and toss out crumbs of grandeur to the famished curs who beg with utter lack of shame.

(Dreamily.)

God and the Emperor alone are great; the Holy Father, too. As for the rest, the kings and dukes, what are they all?

DON RICARDO.

For my own part, I hope that they will choose your Grace.

DON CARLOS.

Your Grace! your Grace! I am unfortunate in everything.—God! if I must remain a king!

DON RICARDO (aside).

'Faith! emperor or not, behold me a grandee of Spain.

DON CARLOS.

When they have made choice of an emperor of Germany, how will his name be made known in the city?

DON RICARDO.

If 't is the duke of Saxony, a single cannon shot; two if the Frenchman, three if your Grace.

DON CARLOS.

And Donna Sol! where'er I turn, vexation and distress. Count, if perchance their choice does fall on me, go thou and tell her so. It may be she will deign to smile upon a Cæsar.

DON RICARDO (smiling).

Your Grace is very kind.

DON CARLOS (interrupting him haughtily).

Silence thereon, I pray you! As yet I have not said what I would have you think. When shall we know the name of the elect?

DON RICARDO.

I think within an hour, at the latest.

DON CARLOS.

Three votes! no more than three! But first of all we must stamp out these vermin of conspirators, and after that we 'll see who will be emperor.

(He counts upon his fingers, and stamps angrily upon the ground.)

Always three votes too few! Ah! those three votes will turn the scale!—And yet Cornelius Agrippa is said to read the future with much skill. He saw in the celestial ocean thirteen stars come sailing down out of the North toward mine. The empire is mine!—But, on the other hand, 't is said that Abbé Jean Trithème foretold that it would fall to François. 'T would have been well for me, the better to throw light upon my fortune, to bring some trifling armament along in furtherance of the prophecy. All the predictions of the shrewdest seer attain fulfillment much more certainly, when an armed force, with pikes and cannon, foot and horse, trumpets and drums, ready to lead the way for any faltering

fate, serves them as midwife and delivers them. Which is the truer prophet,—Jean Trithème? Agrippa? That one whose prophecy 's elucidated by an army, that one who nails a lance-head to the end of what he says, and reckons many a soldier, lansquenet or bandit, whose blades remodel the unsatisfying fortune, and guide the event to suit the prophet's pleasure. Poor fools! who, with a haughty glance and head held high in air, look straight to the empire of the world and say: "It is my right." Cannon innumerable they have, drawn up in endless lines, whose fiery breath would melt whole cities; and they have ships and troops and horses, and you 'd think that they would march straight onward to their goal over the nations they have ground to powder. But ere they take three steps from the great crossroads of human fortune, whence one can find one's way to the abyss more readily than to the throne, they hesitate, uncertain of themselves, seeking in vain to read the book of destiny, and in their doubt go to the necromancer at the corner to be shown their road!

(To Don Ricardo.)

Do you withdraw. This is the hour when

the conspirators should meet. Have you the key to the tomb door?

DON RICARDO (handing a key to the king).

My liege, you 'll not forget the Count de Limbourg, guardian of the key by order of the chapter, who did entrust it to my care, as he does everything to gratify your wishes.

DON CARLOS (dismissing him).

Go thou and do all I have bid thee do! Fail not!

DON RICARDO.

I fly to do your Grace's bidding.

DON CARLOS.

Three cannon shots we fain would hear, thou sayest?

(Don Ricardo bows, and exit. Don Carlos, left alone, falls into a deep reverie, with folded arms, and head hanging forward on his chest; in a moment he stands erect, and turns toward the tomb.)

SCENE II

DON CARLOS (alone).

Forgive me, Charlemagne. These solitary vaults should echo none but words of gravest import. Doubtless thou art indignant at the buzzing our ambition makes about thy sepulchre. And this is Charlemagne's last resting place! O sombre charnel-house, how canst thou, without bursting, retain so giant-like a shade within thy walls! Art thou indeed within, O thou Colossus, creator of a world, and hast thou space in which to stretch thy mighty form to its full length? Ah! what a glorious, enthralling spectacle was Europe, as he fashioned it, and left it to those coming after him! Two leaders by election, to whom every king by right of birth must bend the knee. All duchies, marquisates and military fiefs, all states and kingdoms are hereditary: but still the people chooses its own pope or emperor, so all goes well, and chance corrects what chance has brought to pass. Thus is

the equilibrium maintained, and order always is restored at last. Electors in cloth of gold, and cardinals in scarlet—the twofold sacred college, which holds the world spell-bound with admiration,—are but an empty show, and God's will still is law. Let an idea, born of the exigencies of the time, spring forth some day into the light: it grows and waxes strong, and makes its mark on everything, becomes a man, lays hold on hearts, and ploughs a furrow wheresoe'er it goes; many a monarch tramples it beneath his feet, or puts a gag between its teeth: but lo! it finds its way some day into the diet or the conclave, and suddenly these kings awake to see the much despised idea soaring above their royal heads, its feet upon their necks, and in its hand it bears aloft the globe, while the tiara glitters on its brow. The pope and emperor are all in all. There's naught on earth that is not here for their behoof and by their agency. Unfathomable mystery abides in them, and heaven, whose laws they put in force, makes a great feast for them of kings and peoples, and places them beneath her canopy, where roars the thunder, seated alone before a table,

whereon God serves the world for their consumption. They sit there, cheek by jowl, plying the pruning-knife, and parceling the universe, even as the farmer parcels out his fields. The destinies of all men lie with them. Kings stand without the door, breathing the odors of the smoking viands, gazing with wearied longing through the window-panes, and standing on their toes that they may better view the scene within. The world beneath them huddles together in affrighted groups. They make and unmake realms. One binds, the other cuts. The one is truth, the other power. They have within themselves the reason of their being; they are because they are. When they come forth, equal in majesty, one in his purple robe, the other in his white *sudario*, the dazzled world gazes with awe at these two halves of God, the pope and emperor. The emperor! the emperor! oh! to be emperor! Oh God! to fail! and yet to feel one's heart aflame with courage! How fortunate was he who sleeps within this tomb! How great he was! 'T was even more sublime in those old days. The pope and emperor then were

not mere men. Peter and Cæsar, uniting in their persons the two Romes, bound each to each by mystic marriage-tie, imparting form and soul to the whole human race, melting together dynasties and peoples in a formless mass, to fashion from them a new Europe, and both, with their own hands, remoulding the bronze remnant of the old Roman world! Oh! what a destiny! And yet this tomb is his! Is everything on earth so insignificant that such an one as he must come to this? Heaven save the mark! to be prince, emperor and king! to be the sword, the law! A giant, to have Germany for footstool, Cæsar for title, and be called Charlemagne! to be far greater than Hannibal or Attila, as great as the whole world! and then to come to this!—Ah! stoop to low arts to gain possession of the empire, and then behold the dust that was an emperor. Fill the whole world with uproar and confusion, build up your empire, and never say: "Enough!" erect a mammoth and impenetrable structure; and do you know what will some day remain of all your glory? O madness! this cold stone! and of your high sounding title and great name? some paltry

letters to make children spell! However high the goal to which your pride aspires, this is the inevitable end! The empire! the empire! but what care I? I put my hand upon it and I find it to my liking. Something within me whispers: "Thou shalt have it." And I will have it! If I but had it now! O Heaven! to be the one great source of earthly grandeur, standing alone upon the topmost step of the vast winding stairway! to be the keystone of the arch of a whole edifice of states, piled one upon another, and to see rows of kings beneath one's feet, and wipe one's sandals on their heads! to see below the kings, the feudal houses, margraves and cardinals, doges and coroneted dukes; then bishops, abbots, chiefs of clans, and barons: then clerks and soldiers: then, farther down, far, far, below the height whereon we stand, down in the darkness at the bottom of the pit—mankind! Mankind! that is to say, a mob, a sea of men, tremendous uproar, tears and shrieks, sometimes a bitter laugh, sometimes a groan, which wakes the frightened earth, and strikes our ears through the wilderness of echoes like a trumpet blast. Mankind! a countless swarm from field and

city, to sound the tocsin from the high church towers.

(Musing.)

Groundwork of nations, bearing aloft the monstrous globe supported at the poles—living waves, which hold it ever in their close embrace, and toss it back and forward as they roll, causing all things to change their place, and thrones erected on its highest pinnacles to totter to their fall, till kings cut short their profitless disputes, and raise their eyes to heaven. O kings! look down! Aha! the people! an ocean, never calm, wherein can naught be thrown that does not stir it to its lowest depths! A wave which batters down a throne and acts as cradle for a tomb! A glass wherein a king but rarely finds his own image fair to look upon! Ah! if one looked sometimes into that frowning flood, there one would see empires innumerable, stately shipwrecked barks, which, as it ebbs and flows, it tosses to and fro, which weary it, but which it knows no more. To rule all this! To mount, if the choice falls on you, to this great eminence! And so to mount, knowing the while that you are but a man!

To have the chasm yawning at your feet! God grant I be not giddy at the thought! Oh! moving pyramid of kings and realms, thy apex is most narrow! Woe to the hesitating foot! Where could I cling, should I lose heart on feeling the world move beneath my feet, and the tumultuous heart-beats of the living earth! And when I have this planet in my hands, what shall I do with it? Shall I be equal to the weight of it alone? What resource have I in myself? I, emperor! Great God! I was o'er-burdened with my kingship. Surely those mortals are but few, and of no common temper, whose souls expand to keep pace with their fortunes. And who will make me great? who 'll be my law? who will advise me?

(He falls on his knees in front of the tomb.)

Thou, Charlemagne! Since God, for whom no obstacles exist, has brought us face to face, pour something of thy grandeur, thy sublimity into my heart from out thy tomb! I pray thee give to me the power to look at everything in every light. Show me how small a thing the world is, for I dare not touch it. Point out to me that in this Babel reaching

from the herdsman at its foot to where the Cæsar sits among the clouds, each one in his degree is lost in self-complacent admiration, looks down upon the next below, and struggles to restrain his laughter. Teach me the secret by which thou didst reign and conquer, and tell me that 't is better far to punish than forgive. Is it not so? If it is true that in his solitary bed a mighty shade is sometimes, by the uproar made on earth, roused from the sleep of death, and suddenly his great white tomb stands open, and casts a ray of light upon the world,—if this be true, O mighty emperor, I do beseech thee say what Charlemagne has left for me to do? Speak! though thy potent breath in speaking break this brazen door upon my head! Or rather let me come alone into thy sanctuary, and look upon thy face; do not repulse me with a freezing blast, but rest upon thy elbow on thy couch of stone, and let us speak together. Yes, though thou shouldst tell me, with thy fatal voice, of things which make the eye grow dark, and the cheek pale! Speak, and do not blind thy awestruck son, for doubtless thy abode is filled with a bright

light. Or, if thou wilt not speak, let Carlos, as thou liest there in perfect peace, study thy head as if it were a world, and let him take thy measure at his leisure, O giant among men! For nothing here below is great as thou art in thy nothingness. Failing the shade, let the dust counsel me.

(He reaches toward the lock with the hand holding the key.)

I will go in.

(He steps back.)

Just God! suppose he were to whisper in my ear! Suppose that I should find him there, erect and walking slowly back and forth! Suppose that I come forth with whitened locks! I will go in, however.

(Footsteps are heard.)

Some one comes. Who, save myself, dares come at such an hour to break the rest of such an one as he? Who dares, I say?

(The steps come nearer.)

Ah! I forgot! they 're my assassins. Let us go in.

(He opens the door of the tomb, steps in, and closes it behind him. Enter several men, walking with little noise, enveloped in cloaks, and with broad-rimmed hats pulled over their eyes.)

SCENE III

THE CONSPIRATORS.

(They greet one another by shaking hands, and exchanging a few words in undertones.)

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

(He alone has a lighted torch in his hand.)

Ad augusta.

SECOND CONSPIRATOR.

Per angusta.

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

The saints protect us.

SECOND CONSPIRATOR.

The dead attend on us.

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

God has us in his keeping.

(Sound of footsteps in the darkness.)

SECOND CONSPIRATOR.

Who comes?

VOICE IN THE DARKNESS.

Ad augusta.

SECOND CONSPIRATOR.

Per angusta.

(Enter other conspirators. Sound of footsteps.)

FIRST CONSPIRATOR (to the third).

Look, some one else is coming.

THIRD CONSPIRATOR.

Who comes?

VOICE IN THE DARKNESS.

Ad augusta.

THIRD CONSPIRATOR.

Per angusta.

(Enter more conspirators, who exchange gestures with all the others.)

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

'T is well. We are all here. Gotha, make your report. My friends, the darkness waits upon the light.

(All the conspirators take seats upon the tombs in a semicircle. The first conspirator walks around in front of each of them, and each one lights a taper at his torch. That done, he takes his seat in silence upon a tomb somewhat higher than the others in the centre of the circle.)

DUKE OF GOTHA (rising).

Friends, Charles of Spain, of foreign blood upon his mother's side, aspires to the Holy Empire.

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

He shall have the tomb.

DUKE OF GOTHA. (He throws his taper on the ground and crushes it with his foot.)

May it be with his head as with this taper!

ALL.

Amen!

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

Death to him!

DUKE OF GOTHA.

Let him die!

ALL.

Yes, let him die!

DON JUAN DE HARO.

His father was a German.

DUKE OF LUTZELBOURG.

His mother Spanish.

DUKE OF GOTHA.

But he is not a Spaniard or a German. Death!

A CONSPIRATOR.

But if the electors at this moment were to choose him emperor?

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

They! him! O never!

DON GIL TELLEZ GIRON.

And if they do? Friends, if we strike the head that wears the crown, the crown is dead.

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

If he be chosen to the Holy Empire, whatever he may be, he then becomes a sacred personage, and God alone can lay a finger on him.

DUKE OF GOTHA.

The surest way would be to let him die before becoming sacred.

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

They will not choose him.

ALL.

He shall not have the empire!

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

How many arms are requisite to fix his winding sheet upon him?

ALL.

One.

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

How many blows aimed at his heart?

ALL.

One.

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

Who will strike it?

ALL.

All of us.

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

The victim is a traitor. An emperor is being made elsewhere; let us make a high priest. We will draw lots.

(All the conspirators write their names on their tablets, tear off the leaves, roll them up, and toss them one by one into the urn upon one of the tombs. Then the First Conspirator says:)

Let us pray.

(All kneel. The First Conspirator rises and says:)

May he on whom the choice shall fall believe in God, strike like a Roman, die like a Hebrew. He must defy the wheel and red-hot pincers, sing on the wooden horse, laugh at the burning lamps, do all that in his power lies to kill, and, last of all, meet death with resignation!

(He draws one of the papers from the urn.)

ALL.

What name?

FIRST CONSPIRATOR (in a loud voice).

Hernani.

HERNANI (stepping out from among the conspirators).

I 've won! At last I have thee, whom I have pursued so long: revenge!

DON RUY GOMEZ (coming forward and leading Hernani aside).

Oh! let me strike the blow!

HERNANI.

No, no, upon my life! Pray, do not envy my good fortune, señor: 't is the first time that it has come to me.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Look, thou hast nothing. Well, I will give thee all I own, castles and fiefs, a hundred thousand peasants in my three hundred villages, if I may deal this blow.

HERNANI.

Not so.

DUKE OF GOTHA.

Thy arm would deal a far less lusty blow, old man.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Avaunt! I have the heart, if not the arm. Judge not the sword-blade by the rust upon the sheath.

(To Hernani.)

Thou dost belong to me.

HERNANI.

My life is thine, but his is mine.

DON RUY GOMEZ (taking the horn from his belt).

Hark ye, my friend. I give thee back this horn.

HERNANI (shaken in his resolution).

What! life? But what care I? I have my vengeance in my hand! I am in league with God in this. I have my father to avenge—and more than he, it may be. Dost thou give her to me?

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Never. I give thee back this horn.

HERNANI.

No, no!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Consider well, my child.

HERNANI.

Leave me my prey, my lord.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Accursed be thou who dost deprive me of this joy!

(He replaces the horn at his belt.)

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

Brother! it would be well to lie in wait for Charles this very evening, before they can elect him.

HERNANI.

Have no fear. I know the way in which a man may best be hurried to his grave.

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

So may all treachery recoil upon the traitor's head, and God be with you! If he should die and leave his task undone, we, counts and barons, will go on with it. Now let us swear that we will, each in turn, without exemption, deal a blow at Charles, whose doom is sealed.

ALL (drawing their swords).

We swear.

DUKE OF GOTHA (to the first conspirator).

On what, my brother?

DON RUY GOMEZ.

(He takes his sword by the point and holds it above his head.)

Swear on this cross!

ALL (raising their swords).

And may he die unshriven!

(A cannon shot is heard in the distance. All pause, and listen in silent suspense. The door of the tomb partly opens, and Don Carlos appears upon the threshold with pallid cheeks, and listens. A second report. A third report. He throws the door wide open, but without taking a step, and stands motionless upon the threshold.)

SCENE IV

THE CONSPIRATORS, DON CARLOS: afterward DON RICARDO, LORDS AND GUARDS: KING OF BOHEMIA, DUKE OF BAVARIA: afterward DONNA SOL.

DON CARLOS.

Go on, my lords! the emperor is listening.

(All the tapers are extinguished at the same moment. Profound silence. He takes a step into the darkness, which is so dense that the silent, motionless conspirators can hardly be distinguished.)

Silence and darkness! thence came the motley crew, and thither it betakes itself again. Think you that this will pass off like a dream? that I shall deem you stone men, sitting on their tombs, because you have put out your torches? You spoke full loud a moment since, my statues! Come, come! raise your crestfallen heads, for Charles the Fifth stands before you! Step forth, and strike! Come, would you dare? Ah, no! you dare not. Your torches flared blood-red beneath these vaults. And so my breath alone sufficed to put them out! But look you, turn

your wavering eyes this way; if I have put out a great number, I will light still more.

(He strikes with the iron key upon the bronze door of the tomb. At the signal all the recesses of the crypt bristle with soldiers bearing torches and armed with halberds. At their head the Duke of Alcala, and the Marquis of Almunan.)

Hither, my falcons! here I have the nest, and the prey safe within it.

(To the conspirators.)

'T is my turn to illuminate. The sepulchre is blazing; look!

(To the soldiers.)

Come hither, all of you, for 't is a flagrant crime.

HERNANI (looking at the soldiers).

'T is well! Alone, he seemed to me almost too great. I thought at first that he was Charlemagne. He 's only Charles the Fifth.

DON CARLOS (to the Duke of Alcala).

Constable of Spain!

(To the Marquis of Almunan.)

Admiral of Castile! Disarm these men.

(The conspirators are surrounded and disarmed.)

DON RICARDO (running upon the stage and bowing to the ground).

Your Majesty.

DON CARLOS.

I make thee alcalde of the palace.

DON RICARDO (bowing again).

Without are two electors, deputed by the golden chamber to offer its felicitations to your sacred majesty.

DON CARLOS.

Let them come in.

(Aside to Ricardo.)

And Donna Sol.

(Ricardo bows and exit. Enter, with torches and flourish of trumpets, the King of Bohemia and Duke of Bavaria, arrayed in cloth of gold, with crowns upon their heads. A numerous retinue of German nobles, carrying the banner of the empire, the two-headed eagle, with the crest of Spain in the middle. The soldiers stand aside, drawn up in lines, leaving the path clear for the two electors to the emperor, whom they salute with most profound obeisances, which he returns by raising his hat.)

DUKE OF BAVARIA.

Charles, King of the Romans, your most Sacred Majesty, the world is now in your hands, for the empire is yours. That throne to which all monarchs upon earth aspire is yours. The choice first fell on Frederick, the Duke of Saxony, but he declined the proffered honor, deeming you more worthy. Come, therefore,

and receive the crown, and with it the whole world. The Holy Empire, O king, invests you with its robe, it arms you with its mighty sceptre, and you are great above all men.

DON CARLOS.

As I return I will convey my thanks to the electors. You are dismissed, my lords. Thanks, brother of Bohemia, and cousin of Bavaria. Now go. I soon will follow you.

KING OF BOHEMIA.

Charles, our progenitors were friends. My father loved thy father, and their fathers loved each other. Pray tell me, Charles, if thou, so young to be the sport of varying fortune, wilt have me for thy friend of friends? I saw thee when thou wert a little child, and I cannot forget . . .

DON CARLOS (interrupting him).

King of Bohemia! upon my soul, you are familiar!

(He gives him his hand to kiss, and does the same for the Duke of Bavaria, then dismisses the two electors, who bow to the ground.)

Now go!

(Exeunt the two electors with their retinue.)

THE CROWD.

Vivat!

DON CARLOS (aside).

I have reached my goal! and every one made way for me. Emperor! By grace of Frederick the Wise!

(Enters Donna Sol, escorted by Ricardo.)

DONNA SOL.

Soldiers! the emperor! O Heaven! an unexpected blow! Hernani!

HERNANI.

Donna Sol!

DON RUY GOMEZ (standing beside Hernani. Aside).

She does not see me.

(Donna Sol runs to Hernani. He repulses her with a look of distrust.)

HERNANI.

Madame!

DONNA SOL (drawing the dagger from her bosom).

I have his dagger still.

HERNANI (opening his arms).

My love!

DON CARLOS.

Be silent, all!

(To the conspirators.)

Are you stout of heart? 'T is meet that I should give the world a lesson. Castilian Lara, Saxon Gotha, and the rest, why came you here? Speak out.

HERNANI (stepping forward).

Sire, it is a very simple matter, and I may tell it you. We came to write Balthazar's sentence on the wall.

(He draws a dagger and brandishes it.)

We render unto Cæsar what we owe to Cæsar.

DON CARLOS.

Peace!

(To Don Ruy Gomez.)

And you a traitor, Silva!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Which of us is the traitor, sire?

HERNANI (turning to the conspirators).

The empire and our heads! he has what he desires.

(To the emperor.)

The king's blue cloak might incommode your steps. The purple suits you better. Blood does not show upon it.

DON CARLOS (to Don Ruy Gomez).

My cousin Silva, this is a crime for which thy barony must needs be stricken from the roll. Reflect, Don Ruy, that it is high treason.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

King Roderics do Count Julians make.[3]

DON CARLOS (to the Duke of Alcala).

Take only such as may be dukes or counts. The others . . .

(Don Ruy Gomez, the Dukes of Lutzelbourg and Gotha, Don Juan de Haro, Don Guzman de Lara, Don Tellez Giron, and the Baron of Hohenbourg, stand apart from the other conspirators, with whom Hernani remains. The Duke of Alcala places a strong guard around them.)

DONNA SOL (aside).

He is saved!

HERNANI (stepping out from the group of conspirators).

I claim to be included with the rest!

(To Don Carlos.)

Since there is work here for the headsman's axe, and since Hernani, the base churl, would pass unnoticed and unpunished; since Hernani's head is lower than the level of thy sword; in short, since one, to have the privilege of death, must be a man of rank, I raise myself. God, who bestows the sceptre, and who gave it thee, created me Duke of Segorbo and Cardona, Count Albatera, Marquis of Monroy and Viscount of Gor, and lord of more domains than I can count. I am Juan of Aragon, Grand Master of Avis; in exile I was born, the outlawed son of one who was assassinated at thy father's word, King Carlos of Castile! Murder 's a family affair with us. You have the scaffold, we the dagger. Thus, Heaven made me a duke, exile a mountaineer. But since my sword I 've sharpened to no purpose on the mountains, and to no purpose tempered it in the swift mountain torrent,

(He puts on his hat.)

(To the other conspirators.)

Grandees of Spain, let us be covered!

(The Spaniards all put on their hats.)

(To Don Carlos.)

O king, our heads may claim the privilege of falling covered in thy presence!

(To the prisoners.)

Silva, De Haro, Lara, ye men of title and of noble birth, give place to Juan of Aragon! place to me, dukes and counts!

(To the courtiers and guards.)

I am Juan of Aragon, O king, and ye, his executioners and lackeys! and if your scaffolds are too small, remodel them.

(He joins the group of noble prisoners.)

DONNA SOL.

Great Heaven!

DON CARLOS.

In truth I had forgotten that old story.

HERNANI.

He from whose side the blood is flowing has a better memory. The insult which the insulter carelessly dismisses from his mind, lives on, a festering sore, in the heart of the insulted.

DON CARLOS.

And so I am the son of one at whose command your father's head did fall; I can dispense with other titles, having that.

DONNA SOL (kneeling at the emperor's feet).

O sire! pardon! mercy! Sire, be kind and generous! or let thy wrath fall upon both alike, for he 's my lover and my chosen husband! In him alone I have my being. Oh! how I tremble! Sire, be merciful and let us die together! Your majesty, I crawl here at your sacred feet! I love him! He is mine, as the empire is yours! Oh! mercy!

(Don Carlos looks at her without making any sign.)

What fatal thought is passing through your mind?

DON CARLOS.

How now! Rise, Duchess of Segorbo, Countess Albatera, Marchioness of Monroy—

(To Hernani.)

Thy other names, Don Juan?

HERNANI.

Who speaks? the king?

DON CARLOS.

No, 't is the emperor.

DONNA SOL (rising).

Great God!

DON CARLOS (to Hernani—pointing to her).

Behold thy bride, my lord.

HERNANI (looking upward, with his arms about Donna Sol).

Just God.

DON CARLOS (to Don Ruy Gomez).

Thy noble blood, I know is jealous, cousin.
But Aragon may mate with Silva.

DON RUY GOMEZ (gloomily).

'T is not my noble blood.

HERNANI (gazing fondly at Donna Sol, and holding her in a close embrace).

My hatred is fast vanishing.

(He throws down his dagger.)

DON RUY GOMEZ (aside, looking askance at them).

Shall I pour out the vials of my wrath?
Oh, no! mad love! mad grief! You would
call down their scorn on your old Spanish

head! Burn without outward flame, old man; love on, nor let thy suffering, the gnawing at thy heart be known abroad. Let not a single cry escape thee. They would laugh at thee.

DONNA SOL (in Hernani's arms).

O my dear lord!

HERNANI.

I have naught in my heart save love.

DONNA SOL.

O bliss!

DON CARLOS (aside, with his hand on his breast).

O quench thy fire, thou young and burning heart, and let the mind, which thou hast long disturbed, resume its sway. Henceforth, Flanders and Germany and Spain must be thy sweethearts and thy mistresses, alas!

(Fixing his eyes upon the imperial standard.)

The emperor is like the eagle, his inseparable companion; he has a scutcheon where his heart should be.

HERNANI.

Ah! you are emperor!

DON CARLOS (to Hernani).

Thy heart is worthy of thy noble race, Don Juan.

(Pointing to Donna Sol.)

And worthy too, of her. To thy knees, duke!

(Hernani kneels. Don Carlos detaches his own collar of the Golden Fleece, and puts it around Hernani's neck.)

Accept this collar.

(He draws his sword, and strikes Hernani three blows upon the shoulder.)

Be faithful! By Saint Stephen, duke, I dub thee knight.

(He raises him and embraces him.)

But thou hast now the loveliest and softest collar, one that is not for me, one that is lacking in my most exalted station, the two arms of a woman whom thou lovest and who loves thee in return! Ah! thou 'lt be happy; I am emperor.

(To the conspirators.)

My lords, I have forgotten all your names. Hatred and wrath, all is forgotten. I pardon you. Such is the lesson which 't is fitting I should teach the world. 'T is not in vain that to the King Charles First the Emperor Charles Fifth succeeds, and that before the

eyes of that disconsolate and weeping orphan, Europe, his Catholic Grace becomes his Sacred Majesty, by virtue of a law.

(The conspirators fall on their knees.)

Glory to Charles!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

I only am condemned.

DON CARLOS.

And I!

DON RUY GOMEZ (aside).

But I have not forgiven as he has!

HERNANI.

In God's name who has wrought this change upon us all?

ALL (soldiers, conspirators, nobles).

God speed Germany! Honor to Charles the Fifth!

DON CARLOS (turning to the tomb).

Honor to Charlemagne! Leave us alone together.

(Exeunt omnes.)

DON CARLOS (alone).

(He bows low before the tomb.)

Art thou content with me? Have I not put away the paltry foibles of the king, O

Charlemagne? As emperor, am I not another man? and may I join my helmet to the Roman mitre? Have I the right to take thought of the world's destiny? Have I a firm, unerring step; a step that does not fear to enter on this path, sown with the debris of the vandal hordes, whom thou didst trample on with thy great sandals? Have I in very truth lighted my torch at thy undying flame? and did I rightly understand the voice that spoke to me within thy tomb? I was alone, and desperate,—standing alone before an empire, and a whole world of howling, threatening conspirators: the Danes to punish, the Holy Father to be paid, and Venice, Luther, Soliman, and François, ten thousand jealous daggers gleaming in the dark,—plots, obstacles and enemies innumerable, and twenty peoples, any one of whom would strike fear to the hearts of twenty kings,—and all this, pressed on from behind, and pressing on itself, and everything to do at once: in my despair, I cried to thee: "O how must I begin?" and thou didst make reply: "My son, by clemency!"

ACT FIFTH

THE NUPTIALS

SARAGOSSA

A terrace of the Aragon palace. At the back the top of a staircase leading down into the garden. At the right and left two doors opening upon another terrace surrounded by a balustrade upon which are two tiers of Moorish arches, above and through which the palace gardens can be seen, with fountains sparkling in the darkness, clumps of bushes with lights moving among them, and beyond, the Gothic turrets of the brilliantly illuminated palace. Flourishes of trumpets in the distance. Masks and dominoes, singly and in groups, are walking back and forth upon the terrace. It is dark. Near the front of the stage a group of young noblemen, with their masks in their hands, are laughing and talking noisily.

SCENE I

DON SANCHO SANCHEZ DE ZUNIGA, COUNT OF MONTEREY; DON MATIAS CENTURION, MARQUIS OF ALMUÑAN; DON RICARDO DE ROXAS, COUNT OF CASAPALMA; DON FRANCISCO DE SOTOMAYOR, COUNT OF VELALCAZAR; DON GARCI SUAREZ DE CABAJAL, COUNT OF PEÑALVER.

DON GARCI.

Joy and long life to the bride!

DON MATIAS.

All Saragossa 's sitting at its window.

DON GARCI.

And it does well; for never was a merrier torch-light wedding seen than this, nor fairer night, nor comelier wedded ones!

DON MATIAS.

Generous emperor!

DON SANCHO.

Marquis, upon a certain evening, just at dusk, when we two went abroad with him on a love-errand, who would have said that this would be the end?

DON RICARDO (interrupting).

I too was of the party.

(To the others.)

Give ear to my tale. Three gallants, one a bandit, for whom the scaffold yearns, a duke another, and the third a king, lay siege at once to the same woman's heart. They storm the citadel; who wins the prize? The bandit.

DON FRANCISCO.

There is nothing strange in that. 'T is not in Spain alone that love, and fortune too, are gambled for with loaded dice, and the thief wins.

DON RICARDO.

I made my fortune watching others making love. First count, then grandee, and then court alcalde. I have made good use of my time, and no one has suspected it.

DON SANCHO.

Your secret is to be in the king's way.

DON RICARDO.

Making the most of all my privileges, and doing naught without a purpose.

DON GARCI.

You have found your profit in his pleasures.

DON MATIAS.

What has become of the old duke? Are the nails being driven in his coffin?

DON SANCHO.

A truce to jesting, marquis, 't is a noble soul. The old man was in love with Donna

Sol. His sixty years had turned his hair to gray, but one day made it white.

DON GARCI.

They say he has not since been seen at Saragossa?

DON SANCHO.

Surely you would not have him bring his coffin to the wedding?

DON FRANCISCO.

What doth the emperor?

DON SANCHO.

The emperor 's in melancholy mood to-day. This Luther bores him beyond measure.

DON RICARDO.

Luther! a noble subject of anxiety and fear! How quickly I would make an end of him with four gendarmes!

DON MATIAS.

Soliman also is a thorn in the flesh.

DON GARCI.

Oh! what are Luther, Soliman, Neptunus, Satan, Jupiter and all the rest to me? Women

are fair, the masquerade is lovely, and I have said a hundred foolish things.

DON SANCHO.

The last is the main point.

DON RICARDO.

Garci is right. Even I am not myself upon a holiday; upon my word, it seems as if the mask I wear gives me another head!

DON SANCHO (aside to Matias).

If that 's the case, would that all days were holidays!

DON FRANCISCO (pointing to the door at the right).

My lords, yonder 's the nuptial chamber.

DON GARCI.

They will come forth at once.

DON FRANCISCO.

Nay, think you so?

DON GARCI.

Why, yes, of course.

DON FRANCISCO.

So much the better. The bride is lovely beyond words.

DON RICARDO.

How generous is the emperor! Hernani, a base rebel, with the Golden Fleece! and married! and forgiven! If he had given heed to me, the gallant would have had a bed of stone, the lady one of feathers.

DON SANCHO (aside to Matias).

With what zest I would run him through, false nobleman, made of the coarsest tinsel! The doublet of a count, filled with the precepts of an alguazil.

DON RICARDO (approaching).

What were you saying?

DON MATIAS (aside to Don Sancho).

No fracas here, my lord.

(To Don Ricardo.)

He 's singing one of Petrarch's sonnets to his fair.

DON GARCI.

Have you observed, my lords, amid the flowers and women, and costumes of all colors of the rainbow, the spectre leaning 'gainst the balustrade, who, in his black domino, doth mar the beauty of the masquerade?

DON RICARDO.

Marry, I have!

DON GARCI.

Who is he, pray?

DON RICARDO.

Why, by his figure and his bearing 't is Don Prancasio, the admiral.

DON FRANCISCO.

No.

DON GARCI.

He has not once removed his mask.

DON FRANCISCO.

Nor will he. 'T is my lord Duke of Soma, whose wish it is that every one should look at him.

DON RICARDO.

No, I have spoken with the duke.

DON GARCI.

Then who in God's name is he? Look where he comes!

(A black domino enters, and walks slowly across the terrace at the back of the stage. All turn and look after him, without his seeming to notice it.)

DON SANCHO.

If the dead walk, their gait must be like his.

DON GARCI (running after the domino).

My handsome mask!

(The domino stops and turns. Garci recoils.)

Upon my soul, my lords, I saw the lightning flashing in his eyes!

DON SANCHO.

If 't is the devil, here is one will speak to him.

(He walks up to the black domino, who has not moved.)

Sirrah! com'st thou to us from hell?

THE MASK.

Nay, I come not from hell, but I go thither.

(He resumes his march, and disappears down the flight of stairs. The others look after him in terror.)

DON MATIAS.

His voice is as sepulchral as can be.

DON GARCI.

Basta! a thing which causes fear at other times is food for laughter at a masquerade.

DON SANCHO.

It is some wag.

DON GARCI.

Or if 't is Lucifer, come hither on his way to hell to see us dance, why let us dance!

DON SANCHO.

Surely it is no more than mere buffoonery.

DON MATIAS.

To-morrow we shall know.

DON SANCHO (to Don Matias).

Look after him, I beg you. What has become of him?

DON MATIAS. (He goes to the balustrade.)

He has descended to the garden. Nothing more.

DON SANCHO.

He 's a waggish rascal!

(Reflectively.)

'T is most strange.

DON GARCI (to a lady who passes).

Shall we dance this together, marchioness?

(He bows and offers his hand.)

THE LADY.

My dear count, you know my husband counts the dances that I dance with you.

DON GARCI.

So much the better. 'T is evident that it amuses him. He takes his pleasure so. He does the counting, and we dance.

(The lady gives him her hand, and they go off together.)

DON SANCHO (pensively).

'Pon honor, 't is most strange.

DON MATIAS.

Silence! Here come the wedded pair.

(Enter Hernani and Donna Sol, hand in hand. Donna Sol in a superb bridal costume; Hernani all in black velvet, with the collar of the Golden Fleece about his neck. Behind them a great number of masks, lords and ladies, who form their retinue. Two halberdiers in rich livery follow them, and four pages go before. Everybody stands aside and bows as they pass. Flourish of trumpets.)

SCENE II

THE SAME: HERNANI, DONNA SOL (with their suite).

HERNANI (saluting).

Dear friends!

DON RICARDO (stepping forward to meet him, and bowing low).

Thy happiness is ours, Excelencia.

DON FRANCISCO (gazing at Donna Sol).

Blessed Saint James! 't is Venus by his side!

DON MATIAS.

On such a day, one longs for night to come, my word for 't.

DON FRANCISCO (to Don Matias, pointing to the nuptial chamber).

A charming comedy will soon be played in there! Would it not be great sport to be a fairy, and to see everything that takes place there, after the doors are closed and the lights out?

DON SANCHO (to Don Matias).

'T is late. Shall we not go?

(They all pay a farewell salutation to the bride and groom, and go off the stage, some through the door, others by the staircase at the back.)

HERNANI (escorting them off the stage).

God have you in his keeping!

DON SANCHO (who is the last to go, presses his hand).

And may you be happy!

(Exit.)

(Hernani and Donna Sol are left alone. The sound of footsteps and voices grows fainter and fainter until it ceases altogether. During the early part of the following scene, the trumpets are heard with lessening frequency, and the distant lights go out one by one. Silence and darkness gradually return.)

SCENE III

HERNANI, DONNA SOL.

DONNA SOL.

They are all gone, at last!

HERNANI (attempting to take her in his arms).

Dear heart!

DONNA SOL (blushing and drawing back).

It must be late, I think.

HERNANI.

Sweet angel! it is always late ere we are left alone.

DONNA SOL.

The noise has wearied me. Dear my lord, does not this merrymaking mar true happiness?

HERNANI.

Thou sayest well, for happiness, my love, is of grave mien. It looks for hearts of bronze, and makes its impress on them slowly. The

flowers thrown to it by pleasure terrify it. Its smile is always nearer tears than laughter.

DONNA SOL.

Its smile, as I now see it in your eyes, is fair as day.

(Hernani tries to lead her toward the door. She blushes.)

I 'll come anon.

HERNANI.

I am thy slave. Remain, remain! Do what thou wilt. I ask for naught. Thou knowest what thou dost, and whatsoe'er thou dost is well done. I 'll laugh, if thou wilt have me, or I 'll sing. My heart is burning. But do thou bid the volcano quench its flames, and it will close its yawning crater, and on its sides have naught but flowers and green turf. The giant 's in the toils, Vesuvius enslaved, and what is it to thee that his heart 's drowned in molten lava? Thou wouldst have flowers? 't is well. The smouldering volcano must e'en do its best to bloom for thee.

DONNA SOL.

Ah! dear Hernani of my heart, how good you are to a poor girl!

HERNANI.

What name is that, señora? Oh! in pity, call me by that name no more! Thou bringest to my mind what I would fain forget. I know that an Hernani once existed—in a dream—whose eye gleamed like the gleaming blade—a man of darkness and the mountains, an outlaw upon whom the word *revenge* was written everywhere, a miserable wretch upon whose heels anathema did follow close! I know him not. I love the meadows and the forests, the flowers and the nightingale's sweet song. I am Juan of Aragon, husband of Donna Sol! and I am happy!

DONNA SOL.

I am happy, too!

HERNANI.

What care I for the rags I left behind me when I entered here! With sorrowing heart I was returning to the palace of my ancestors. An angel of the Lord stood waiting for me on the threshold. I enter, and restore the broken columns, light the fire, throw the windows open, and bid my servants pull the weeds up from the courtyard pavement: I am all

happiness and joy and love. Let them give back to me my towers and my fortresses, my waving plume, and my seat at the Council of Castile; but let my Donna Sol come to my side with blushing cheeks and eyes cast down; let us be left together, and the rest is naught! Naught have I seen or said or done. I wipe out all the past, forget, and so begin again! Be it wise or foolish, I have you, and I love you, and you are my treasure.

DONNA SOL (examining his Golden Fleece).

How beautiful this golden collar is on this black velvet!

HERNANI.

You saw the king dressed in this wise before you did see me.

DONNA SOL.

I did not notice him. What is the king to me, or any other? In sooth, is it the velvet, or the satin? Ah, no, my duke, 't is thy neck that the golden collar doth so well become. You are so noble and so handsome, good my lord!

(He tries to draw her away.)

Anon! one moment more!—Dost see that I am weeping? weeping for very joy! Come, let us look out on the lovely night.

(She goes to the balustrade.)

Only a moment, my dear lord! Just time enough to breathe and take one look. The lights are out, the festal music stilled. The night and we alone are left. Oh! perfect happiness! Dost thou not think, that even while she sleeps, Nature with one eye watches o'er us lovingly? The sky is cloudless. Everything, like us, is taking sweet repose. Come, breathe with me the perfume-laden air. Look. No more lights or noise. All is as still as death. A moment since, while you were speaking, the moon showed her pale face above the horizon; her trembling light and thy dear voice went to my heart together, filling my soul with calm delight, and oh! my love, I would have liked to die that moment!

HERNANI.

Who would not forget all else for thy celestial voice! Thy words are a sweet song, wherein is naught of human. And like a traveler, gliding down a swift-flowing river of

a fine summer's eve, who sees a thousand flowery fields fly by, my charmed thoughts glide down the current of thy dreams.

DONNA SOL.

The silence is too still, the calm is too profound. Wouldst thou not like to see a star shine out? or that a sweet, entrancing voice should suddenly burst forth in song out yonder in the night?

HERNANI (smiling).

Capricious love! 't was but a moment since that thou didst shun the lights and music!

DONNA SOL.

At the ball, 't is true! But a bird singing in the fields; an unseen nightingale! or a flute playing far away! For music soothes the mind, attunes the soul to harmony, and like an angel choir, awakes a thousand voices and sets them singing in the heart. Indeed, it would be heavenly!

(The sound of a horn is heard in the distance.)

Ah, God! my cup of bliss is full!

HERNANI (starting convulsively—aside).

Alas! poor child!

DONNA SOL.

An angel understood my wish, and granted it—was it thy good angel?

HERNANI (bitterly).

Yes, my good angel!

(The horn recommences.)

(Aside.)

Again!

DONNA SOL (smiling).

Don Juan, I know the music of your horn.

HERNANI.

Do you, my love?

DONNA SOL.

Half of this serenade I owe to you.

HERNANI.

Half,—thou hast said it.

DONNA SOL.

Tedious ball! 'T is pleasanter to me a thousand times to hear the horn afar off in the forest. And then, it is your horn, it 's like your voice.

(The horn is heard again.)

HERNANI (aside).

Aha! the tiger 's growling, and will have his prey!

DONNA SOL.

Don Juan, that sweet music fills my heart with joy.

HERNANI (rising, with a terrible expression).

Call me Hernani! call me Hernani! That fatal name and I can never part!

DONNA SOL (trembling).

Pray, what 's the matter?

HERNANI.

The old man!

DONNA SOL.

God! what a ghastly look! What is the matter?

HERNANI.

The old man laughing in the darkness! Do you not see him?

DONNA SOL.

Where are you wandering? Who is the old man?

HERNANI.

The old man!

DONNA SOL (falling on her knees).

On my knees I do beseech thee; oh! tell me what secret tears thy heart? What is it?

HERNANI.

I swore it!

DONNA SOL.

Swore?

(She follows all his movements with anxious eyes. He suddenly stops and passes his hand across his brow.)

HERNANI (aside).

What do I say? She must be spared this pain.

(Aloud.)

'T is nothing. What did I say to thee?

DONNA SOL.

You said . . .

HERNANI.

No, no. My thoughts were wandering. I am slightly ill. Be not alarmed, I pray you.

DONNA SOL.

Is there not something I may bring to thee? thy servant does but wait for thy command.

(The horn begins again.)

HERNANI (aside).

He 'll have his pound of flesh! He has my oath!

(He feels his belt, in which there is neither sword nor dagger.)

Nothing! It was to be! Ah me!

DONNA SOL.

Art thou in pain?

HERNANI.

'T is an old wound, which was to all appearance closed for good and all: it has reopened.

(Aside.)

She must be sent away.

(Aloud.)

Donna Sol, my love, that chest which in less happy days I used to carry with me . . .

DONNA SOL.

I know the one thou meanest. What wouldst thou have me do with it?

HERNANI.

In it there is a flask, wherein is an elixir that may relieve this pain that tortures me. Wilt thou go bring it me?

DONNA SOL.

I go, my lord.

(Exit Donna Sol through the door of the nuptial chamber.)

SCENE IV

HERNANI (alone).

And so this is the end of all my happiness! I see the fatal finger writing on the wall! O God! how bitterly fate mocks at me!

(He falls into a profound reverie, disturbed by convulsive trembling; then suddenly turns about.)

How now? All is as still as death. I hear no one. Suppose I was mistaken?

(The mask in the black domino appears at the top of the stairs. Hernani stands as if turned to stone.)

SCENE V

HERNANI, THE MASK.

THE MASK.

"Come what, come may, when 't is thy wish, my lord, whatever be the place or time, that I should die, whenever thou dost think the time has come, then blow this horn and take no other step. Thy wish will be fulfilled." That compact had the dead for witnesses. Say, is my wish fulfilled?

HERNANI (in an undertone).

'T is he!

THE MASK.

I come to thy abode, and tell thee that the time has come. 'T is now my turn. I find thee in default.

HERNANI.

'T is well. What is thy pleasure? What wilt thou do with me? Say on.

THE MASK.

Thou mayest choose 'twixt poison and the dagger. I bring with me all that is necessary. We will go hence together.

HERNANI.

So be it.

THE MASK.

Shall we pray?

HERNANI.

Pray, what 's the use?

THE MASK.

Which dost thou choose?

HERNANI.

The poison.

THE MASK.

Good! Give me thy hand.

(He hands a phial to Hernani, who turns deathly pale as he takes it.)

Drink now,—and let there be an end.

(Hernani puts the phial to his lips, then takes it away.)

HERNANI.

Oh, no! for very pity let it be to-morrow! Ah! duke, if thou hast still a heart within thy body, or, at the least, a soul, if thou art not a shade escaped from hell, one of the damnèd dead, condemned henceforth to be a phantom or a demon, if God has not yet written on thy brow the fatal "Nevermore!"

if thou dost know aught of the supreme bliss of loving well at twenty, and of taking her to wife whom thou dost love—if ever thy beloved has trembled in thy warm embrace—in God's name wait until to-morrow! To-morrow thou wilt come again!

THE MASK.

'T is folly to talk thus! To-morrow, and to-morrow! Thou dost scoff at me! Thy marriage bells this morning rang thy knell! What should I do to-night, I pray to know? 'T would be my death. And who would come and take thee then, and carry thee away? I too go down alone into the tomb! Young man, thou needs must go with me.

HERNANI.

But I say no! and I will rid myself of thee, thou demon! I will not obey.

THE MASK.

I thought as much. So be it. Prithee, upon what didst thou take the oath? Ah, yes! on something of but little moment, after all! Thy father's head! That may be put aside, for youth is fickle.

HERNANI.

Father! father! Ah! I shall lose my mind!

THE MASK.

Oh, no! 't is nothing more than perjury and treachery.

HERNANI.

My lord!

THE MASK.

Since it would seem that first-born sons of the great Spanish families make light of proving faithless to their word, farewell!

(He turns as if to take his leave.)

HERNANI.

Nay, do not go!

THE MASK.

In that case . . .

HERNANI.

Heartless man!

(He takes the phial.)

Ah, me! to turn back at the very gate of heaven!

(Enters Donna Sol. She does not see the mask, who stands in the background.)

SCENE VI

HERNANI, THE MASK, DONNA SOL.

DONNA SOL.

I could not find the chest.

HERNANI.

Just God! 't is she. At what a moment!

DONNA SOL.

What can it be? I terrify him, and he trembles at my voice! What hast thou in thy hand? Ah! the fearful thought that comes into my mind! What hast thou in thy hand? Pray tell me.

(The domino approaches and removes his mask. She shrieks as she recognizes Don Ruy de Gomez.)

'T is poison!

HERNANI.

God in heaven!

DONNA SOL (to Hernani).

What have I done to thee? What dreadful mystery is this? Don Juan, you deceived me!

HERNANI.

I should say naught of this to thee. I gave my promise to the duke, who saved my life, that I would die when he should say the word. It is a debt that Aragon must pay to Silva.

DONNA SOL.

You are not his, but mine. What matter all your other oaths?

(To Don Ruy.)

My lord, love makes me strong. I will defend him against you and all the world.

DON RUY GOMEZ (unmoved).

Defend him, if thou canst, against his plighted oath.

DONNA SOL.

What oath?

HERNANI.

I swore.

DONNA SOL.

No, no! thou art not bound! It cannot be! 'T is downright folly! madness! crime!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Come, duke!

(Hernani moves as if to obey. Donna Sol strives to hold him back.)

HERNANI.

Release me, Donna Sol. It must be so. Don Ruy has my word, and from the skies my father 's looking down upon me.

DONNA SOL (to Don Ruy).

Better for you 't would be to seek to rob the very tigers of their young, than to rob me of him I love so well! Think you that you know Donna Sol? Long did I play the gentle, innocent and timid girl in pity for your age, your sixty years; but do you see mine eyes swimming in tears of rage?

(She takes a dagger from her bosom.)

Dost see this dagger? Ah! gray-haired madman, fear you not the dagger when the eye has threatened? Beware, Don Ruy! I am of thy blood, mine uncle! Listen to what I say. Were I your daughter, woe to you if you lay hand upon my husband!

(She throws away the dagger and falls on her knees at the duke's feet.)

Ah! see. I kneel here at your feet! Have pity on us! Mercy! Alas! my lord, I am but a weak woman, and my little strength

is spent before it leaves my heart. 'T is no hard task to crush me. Here at your feet I kneel, and do implore you to have pity on us!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Donna Sol!

DONNA SOL.

Pardon us! We Spaniards in our grief are readily aroused to earnest speech, as you well know. Alas! you used not to be hard of heart. Mercy! by laying hand on him, mine uncle, you will cause my death! Mercy! he is so dear to me!

DON RUY GOMEZ (frowning).

He 's far too dear to you!

HERNANI.

Thou weepest!

DONNA SOL.

No, my love! no, no! I will not have thee die! I say I will not have it!

(To Don Ruy.)

Be merciful to-day, and I will love you dearly.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

After him! Think you to quench the thirst that is devouring me, with the mere dregs of love, or friendship, which is even worse?

(Pointing to Hernani.)

He is the only one! He is all in all! And I, God save the mark! what can your friendship do for me? Ten thousand furies! he would have the heart, the love, the throne, and at a glance from you would toss me alms! And if a word must needs be wasted to appease my madness, he would say to you:—"Say thus and so to him, no more,"—cursing the while beneath his breath the greedy suppliant to whom he tossed the refuse from his table. Derision! shame! No, no. We must have done with it. So drink.

HERNANI.

He has my word, and I must keep it.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Come!

(Hernani puts the phial to his lips. Donna Sol grasps his arm.)

DONNA SOL.

Oh, no! not yet! Deign both of you to hear me.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

The sepulchre is open, and I cannot wait.

DONNA SOL.

One instant. My lord! my Don Juan! Ah! both of you are cruel beyond words! What is it that I ask of them? One instant! that is all, all that I ask! oh! let this poor, heart-broken woman say what 's in her heart! oh! let me speak!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

I am in haste.

DONNA SOL.

My lords, you make me tremble! What in God's name have I done to you?

HERNANI.

Oh! her voice tears my heart.

DONNA SOL (still clinging to his arm).

You see I have a thousand things to tell him.

DON RUY GOMEZ (to Hernani).

You must die.

DONNA SOL (still hanging upon Hernani's arm).

Don Juan, when I 've spoken, thou mayst do whate'er thou wilt.

(She snatches the phial.)

I have it!

(She holds up the phial before the eyes of Hernani and the astonished Don Ruy.)

DON RUY GOMEZ.

It seems, Don Juan, that herein I have to do with none but women, and must seek elsewhere loyal hearts. Thou dost swear fine oaths by him who did conceive thee, and I go hence to talk with him among the dead concerning it! Farewell.

(He walks away, as if to take his leave. Hernani detains him.)

HERNANI.

Stay, duke!

(To Donna Sol.)

Alas! my love, tell me, I conjure thee, if thou wouldst have me called a perjurer and felon; if thou wouldst have me go from place to place with traitor written on my brow. In pity's name, I pray thee give me back the poison! By our love, by our immortal souls!

DONNA SOL (darkly).

Thou wishest it?

(She drinks.)

Well, here it is.

DON RUY GOMEZ (aside).

Ah! 't was for her!

DONNA SOL (returning the half-emptied phial to Hernani).

Take it, I say.

HERNANI (to Don Ruy).

Dost see thy handiwork, thou villain?

DONNA SOL.

Chide me not, for I have left thy share.

HERNANI (taking the phial).

O God!

DONNA SOL.

Thou wouldst not thus have left me mine, for thou hast not the heart of a good Christian spouse. 'T is not in thee to love as madly as a Silva loves. But I drank first, and so my mind 's at rest. Drink if thou wilt!

HERNANI.

Alas! what hast thou done, unhappy girl?

DONNA SOL.

'T was thou wouldst have it so.

HERNANI.

It is a frightful death!

DONNA SOL.

Oh no! why should it be?

HERNANI.

This potion leads straight to the sepulchre.

DONNA SOL.

To-night we were to sleep together, were we not? What boots it in what bed we sleep?

HERNANI.

Ah! father, thus thou dost avenge thyself on me, who did forget thee.

(He puts the phial to his lips.)

DONNA SOL (throwing her arms about him).

O God! what fearful pain! Oh! taste it not! My mind is wandering. Stay thy hand! Alas! my Don Juan, this poison is alive! it is a hydra with a thousand teeth, which gnaws the heart, and eats the life away! I knew not that such suffering could be! What is this thing, in God's name? It is fire! I do beseech thee not to drink! Thy suffering would be too great.

HERNANI (to Don Ruy).

Thy heart is made of marble! Couldst thou not choose some other poison for her?

(He drinks and throws the phial away.)

DONNA SOL.

What hast thou done?

HERNANI.

What didst thou do?

DONNA SOL.

Come to my arms, O my beloved!

(They sit down side by side.)

Dost thou not suffer terribly?

HERNANI.

No, no.

DONNA SOL.

Thus has our wedding night begun! I am far paler than a bride should be.

HERNANI.

Woe 's me!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

'T was preordained by fate.

HERNANI.

O misery! Despair! that I must needs look on in utter helplessness, while Donna Sol, my own beloved, suffers!

DONNA SOL.

Be calm. The pain grows less. A moment hence, and we will spread our wings to fly

together, toward the brighter light, and journey hand in hand into the better world. One kiss, a single kiss!

(They kiss.)

DON RUY GOMEZ.

O agony!

HERNANI (in a weakened voice).

Blessed be Heaven, which, though my path through life has lain along the edge of yawning, spectre-haunted chasms, doth still permit me, spent by so rough a road, to sink to sleep, my lips against thy hand!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

What happiness is theirs!

HERNANI (his voice growing weaker and weaker).

Come—Donna Sol—'t is growing dark. Art thou in pain?

DONNA SOL (in equally faint tones).

'T is nothing.

HERNANI.

Dost thou see flashes in the darkness?

DONNA SOL.

No, not yet.

HERNANI (with a long-drawn sigh).

There is . . .

(He falls.)

DON RUY GOMEZ (lifting up his head, which falls back).

Dead!

DONNA SOL (sitting half erect, with disheveled hair).

Dead! no, no! we are but sleeping. He is sleeping. He is my husband. We do love each other. This is our wedding night, and this our nuptial couch.

(Almost inaudibly.)

Do not awaken him, my lord Duke of Mendoza. He is weary.

(She turns Hernani's head.)

My love, keep thy face turned toward mine. Nearer—nearer still . . .

(She falls back.)

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Dead! I am damned forever!

(He kills himself.)

NOTES

[1] The story of the Seven Lords of Lara is said by Ticknor, in his "History of Spanish Literature," to be one of the most romantic in Spanish history. The Seven Lords of Lara, in consequence of a family quarrel, are betrayed by their uncle into the hands of the Moors, and put to death; while their father, by the basest treason, is confined in a Moorish prison, where, by a noble Moorish lady, he has an eighth son, the famous Mudarra, who at last avenges all the wrongs of his race. On this story there are above thirty ballads, in one of which the father is invited to a feast by the Moorish king, and the heads of his seven sons are served up on chargers at the table. In his terrible wrath he snatches a sword from one of the attendants, and before he can be disarmed and secured slays thirteen of the Moors about the king.

[2] A yearly tribute exacted by the Moors after a victory.

[3] Roderic, the last Gothic king, who lived in the ninth century and was a favorite hero of Spanish romantic literature, dishonored the daughter of Count Julian, who, in revenge, invited the Saracens into Spain and gave aid to them in their invasion.

EDITION DEFINITIVE

NOTE I

THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT

The original manuscript of HERNANI bears upon its first page this epigraph:

TRES PARA UNA.

Each act is dated at the beginning and the end.

The first act was begun August 29, 1829. The second was begun September 3, and finished September 6. The third was begun September 8, and finished September 14. The fourth was begun September 15, and finished September 20. The fifth was begun September 21, and finished September 25.

The following are the variant readings and unpublished fragments found in the manuscript, together with those lines which have been replaced by others or suppressed in the published texts.

ACT FIRST

SCENE I

HERNANI, DON CARLOS, DONNA SOL.

(Some one knocks at the door.)

HERNANI.

(To Don Carlos, pointing to the closet.)

Let us hide.

DON CARLOS.

In the closet?

HERNANI.

Go you in. I 'll answer for it that 't will hold us both.

DON CARLOS.

A thousand thanks; it 's much too wide. Señor, is that a fit sheath to put Christians in, forsooth? Suppose that we are both within,—the duke goes to the box for a cigar—opens the door, and finds two men!

ACT SECOND

SCENE I

DON CARLOS, DON MATIAS, and the other lords.

. . . . . .

DON CARLOS.

How gladly would I give three of my Spanish states to buy three Spaniards like this mountain king!

DON MATIAS.

Belike you 'd be the gainer by the bargain. For 't is said that a great name is hidden underneath his bandit pseudonym.

DON CARLOS.

The thing which I esteem so highly in him, marquis, and for which I do proclaim my admiration, is his great heart, not his great name. But what is this great name? He must be one of those who were so slow to recognize my kingship that I never saw their faces.

. . . . . .

DON MATIAS.

In truth, the gist of all the rumors forged or manufactured is that Hernani is no other than Don Jorge of Aragon, *soi-disant* Duke Segorbo, in exile born, the outlawed son of an unlucky father, who ended his long strife with yours upon the scaffold, because he dared to love the queen like any other woman. And he, they say, disloyal miscreant, has it in mind to cut himself an ample ducal cloak out of the royal cloak.

DON CARLOS.

Yes, that is very like my man!

. . . . . .

DON CARLOS.

(Looking up at Donna Sol's window, which remains dark.)

Nothing as yet! However, sirs, we needs must make an end on 't. The other may arrive at any moment. What 's the hour?

DON MATIAS.

Sire, I cannot say.

(A lantern passes slowly along the back of the stage, carried, at the end of a long stick, by a man dressed in black, who can hardly be distinguished in the darkness.)

DON CARLOS.

What is it burning yonder in the square?

DON RICARDO.

It is the crier passing on his round.

DON CARLOS.

He calls the hour. Hush! let us listen.

THE CRIER.

Midnight! Pray for the souls of the dead!

(All three kneel and pray. The crier passes slowly across, and disappears. They rise.)

DON CARLOS.

(Finishing his prayer aloud.)

. . . They trust in thee, my God! forgive their sins and errors. High are the walls around thy paradise, O Lord; let them, we pray thee, pass them with ourselves!

DON RICARDO.

(Pointing to the walls of the palace.)

Must we pass these as well?

DON CARLOS.

Hold your peace! you are profane . . .

(A light appears in Donna Sol's window.)

Go all of you into the shadow yonder, watch for the other's coming, and take heed to it that he do not

intrude upon my ditty with his flute. 'T would spoil the melody.

ACT THIRD

SCENE III

HERNANI, DON RUY GOMEZ, DONNA SOL, PAGES, SERVANTS.

HERNANI.

(To a young servant.)

. . . Come! Thou shalt win the prize.

(To Donna Sol, who seeks to dissuade him.)

God's death! may I not do these people a good turn! I give my head, and they are glad to have it. 'T is for them. They 'll go with it to Saragossa and there sell it, if you 'll not have it for my wedding-gift!

SCENE IV

HERNANI, DONNA SOL.

(Donna Sol returns despairingly to Hernani who has not moved.)

DONNA SOL.

Are you mad? O what has caused your mind to wander thus? I see you once again, and once again my heart begins to beat with joyous life, and you would throw your life away! What is my crime? Ah! you are saved, whether you will or no, and 't is well done! If you had your deserts, I should revenge myself upon you, but my heart is soft. Alas! my angel, my Hernani,

let me kneel and kiss thy feet! Ah! thou hast given thyself back to me!

HERNANI.

(Looking down at his weaponless belt. Aside.)

What! nothing! not a knife!

DONNA SOL.

What bliss! 't is he, indeed! 't is he! What bliss! God lets him be here, by my side! and lets me see again his eyes, his brow, his noble, manly hand! Alas! 't was time! 't would be too late to-morrow!

. . . . . .

HERNANI.

How sweet a dagger-thrust from thee would be to me!

DONNA SOL.

Hernani!

HERNANI.

Oh! take my soul into thy soul, my steps into thy path, my ashes to thy flame! Thou 'lt have it so. So let it be! I have resisted.

SCENE V

HERNANI, DONNA SOL, DON RUY GOMEZ.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

(Addressing the portraits.)

. . . . . .

Did you in your days ever see the like? Oh, no! Don Manuel! who didst see the brothers Transtamare! Sanchez, who knewest the assassins of Inez! thou,

Nuño, who wert taken by the Moors! and thou, Blas, who didst see Luna's *zamarra* torn!

HERNANI.

Deign, my lord duke . . .

DON RUY GOMEZ.

D 'ye see! The perjured wretch would speak!

SCENE VI

SCENE OF THE PORTRAITS.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Christoval took the plume, and gave the king his horse. He died upon the field. This other is Don Nuño, father of Sanchez yonder. Together they slew Mauregat, the accursed usurper, in his lair. And this Don Juan de Silva, who sold his lands to pay Ramiro's ransom.

. . . . . .

(Exeunt courtiers, following the king and Donna Sol.)

DON PEDRO.

(To the old Duke of Alcala.)

Duke, what sayest thou of the king?

DUKE OF ALCALA.

For a man, a girl, be she fair or ugly! a needle for a sword! Don Ruy and the bandit clear their skirts, but the king 's duped! and for myself I do not see wherein his Majesty has gained by all that has transpired.

DON RICARDO.

(In an undertone to Don Matias.)

The duke is more or less shortsighted!

ACT FOURTH

SCENE III

SCENE OF THE CONSPIRATORS.

HERNANI.

My life is yours, his is mine!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

(Taking the horn from his belt.)

I give her to thee, and I give thee back this horn.

HERNANI.

What! Life and Donna Sol! But no! I will pursue my vengeance! I am in league with God in this. I have my father to avenge—and more than him perhaps!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

I give her to thee, and I give thee back this horn.

SCENE IV

AFTER THE PARDON.

HERNANI.

(Gazing fondly at Donna Sol.)

. . . My hatred is fast vanishing! O God! I pray thee do not interrupt this dream, this blissful dream that has but now begun!

DONNA SOL.

Nay, 't is a ghastly dream just drawing to its close.

HERNANI.

'T is too great bliss, and needs must breed remorse. Oh! Donna Sol! my Donna Sol! my father is among the dead, and thirsts for blood and for his prey. Here am I thy husband, and a duke, rich, powerful, and envied by all men; but first and best of all, O bliss! I am thy spouse! But all this helps not to avenge my father!

DONNA SOL.

What sayest thou?

HERNANI.

Is what I do here what my duty bids me do? I must refuse the gift, and strike!

DONNA SOL.

Hernani!

HERNANI.

Ah! God will punish me for having failed to punish!

ACT FIFTH

SCENE II

HERNANI, DONNA SOL.

HERNANI.

(Aside.)

O God! 't is the old man!

DONNA SOL.

(Listening.)

It is the air they play at curfew; I used to sing it in the evening to my playmates. But 't is the mountain horn: the serenade 's for you. I 'll wager that it is for you.

HERNANI.

(Wildly.)

For me?

DONNA SOL.

(Smiling.)

I 'm sure of it.

(The horn begins again.)

HERNANI.

Again!

SCENE III

HERNANI, THE MASK.

THE MASK.

I find thee in default . . .

HERNANI.

E'en so. What is thy pleasure? Poison? the dagger? Speak.

THE MASK.

(Placing a phial and a dagger upon the table.)

Thou mayest choose. To my last feast, my guest, I do invite thee. The one that thou dost leave will be for me. Be quick. Which dost thou choose?

HERNANI.

The poison.

THE MASK.

'T is the longer way. Thy hand!

(He gives Hernani the phial, and takes the dagger himself.)

Drink, that we may have done with it.

. . . . . .

Since thy honor 's bankrupt, I, thy defrauded creditor, resume my journey.

SCENE IV

HERNANI, DON RUY GOMEZ, DONNA SOL.

DONNA SOL.

(Returns, bringing the chest.)

I could not find the key.

HERNANI.

'T is useless now.

DONNA SOL.

Thou 'rt better?

HERNANI.

Yes, my head is less oppressed.

DONNA SOL.

Holy virgin! what is that black phial?

HERNANI.

It is a sedative, which I am just about to drink.

. . . . . .

DONNA SOL.

(To Don Ruy.)

Beware, my uncle! I am of your blood. But no,

it is a phantom! and as I look at you more closely,—you are not the duke! He is in Flanders. There 's falsehood, treachery and magic in all this! I 'll put thy prestige to the test of this good steel. But, though you were my uncle or my father, I would say: "Woe unto you if you do lift your hand against my husband!"

. . . . . .

DONNA SOL.

(Taking Hernani's hand.)

I am far paler than a bride should be.

HERNANI.

Ah! thy features are made lovelier by death. Art thou in pain?

DONNA SOL.

'T is nothing. But thou art pale as death!

HERNANI.

Alas! it is to see thee suffer.

DONNA SOL.

Think not of that, I am not suffering. Art thou not my Don Juan, my protector? When by thy side I know no pain. When by thy side I am all love and joy. Oh! save me! save me! the fire is burning up my vitals! Could I but dash my head against the wall! Ah! my dear love, I do assure thee that I am in agony! My God! Oh! my Don Juan, thou who lovest me, in God's name, save me! I am on fire!

NOTE II

THE FIRST EDITION, 1830

In the Edition *princeps* of 1830, the drama has a second title; it is called *Hernani*, or *Castilian Honor*. On the other hand, the different acts have no titles.

This first edition contains some lines, which were afterwards changed or replaced by others.

In Act I, Scene III, Don Ruy Gomez does not say:

"Ah! you have broken your new toy! but God grant that the fragments may fly back into your faces."

He says:

"Ah! you have broken your new toy!"

And Hernani, interrupting him a second time, says:

"*Excelencia!*"

Whereupon Don Ruy cries:

"Who dares speak, when I say, 'Silence'?"

These lines were repeated in *Les Burgraves*.

In Act II, Scene II, Donna Sol says to Don Carlos:

"I tell thee, king, that if a man were born where his place is by virtue of his qualities of soul: if 't were the heart alone that makes the brigand and the king, his would the sceptre be, and thine the dagger."

ESMERALDA

PREFACE

As it is possible that there may be those who will remember a novel, when listening to an opera, the author deems it to be his duty to give notice to the public, that in order to introduce upon the lyric stage with its peculiar limitations something of the drama which served as a foundation for the book entitled *Notre-Dame de Paris*, it was necessary to modify the action as well as the characters to some extent. The character of Phœbus de Châteaupers, for example, is one of those which required to be changed; a different dénouement was made necessary, etc. However, although, even in writing this trifle, the author has departed as little as possible, and only when the music demanded it, from certain rules which are in his opinion essential to the proper construction of every work, small or great, it is not his purpose to offer here to his readers—he would better say, to

his auditors — anything more than a mere sketch of an opera, arranged more or less happily to suit the music — a *libretto* pure and simple, the publication of which is explained by imperious custom. He can see in it only a plot, such as it is, which asks nothing better than to unfold to the accompaniment of that rich and dazzling embellishment which is called music.

The author supposes, therefore, assuming that anyone will bestow a thought upon this libretto, that a work of so special a nature can in no event be judged by itself alone, apart from the musical exigencies to which the poet is bound to submit, and which, at the opera, are entitled to be first considered. He earnestly begs the reader, however, to see in these lines which he is now writing only what they actually contain, that is to say his personal views as to this particular libretto, and not an unseemly contempt and distaste for this variety of poetical work in general, and for the magnificent establishment where such works are performed. He, being himself of no account, will, if need be, remind those who occupy the most elevated stations,

that no one has the right to disdain a piece of this sort, even from a literary stand-point. Let us not forget that this royal stage has received illustrious visitors, even if we count none but poets. In 1671 a tragedy-ballet entitled *Psyche*, was produced with all the splendor of which the lyric stage was capable. The libretto had two authors: one of them was called Poquelin de Molière, the other Pierre Corneille.

November 14, 1836.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

ESMERALDA
PHŒBUS DE CHATEAUPERS
CLAUDE FROLLO
QUASIMODO
FLEUR-DE-LYS
MADAME ALOISE DE GONDELAURIER
DIANE
BERANGERE
VICOMTE DE GIF
M. DE CHEVREUSE
M. DE MORLAIX
CLOPIN TROUILLEFOU
THE PUBLIC CRIER

Populace, Vagrants, Archers, etc.

Paris—1482.

ACT FIRST

The Court of Miracles at night. Large numbers of beggars, male and female, plying their trade, in diverse attitudes. Boisterous dancing. The King of Thune upon his cask. Bonfires and torches. A circle of squalid houses in the shadow.

SCENE I

CLAUDE FROLLO, CLOPIN TROUILLEFOU, THE VAGRANTS; afterward ESMERALDA and QUASIMODO.

Long live Clopin, King of Thune!
Vagrants all of Paris gay!
Dead of night is our high noon,
The hour when all cats are gray,
Dance! a fig for pope and bull!
At our pleasure laughing fare we;
April showers our plumes may soil,
Or June may scorch them, little care we!
We detect the scent afar
Of th' avenging archer's sword,
And when the traveler draws near
We scent the bag that holds his hoard.

We go by night, when shines the moon,
To dance, with ghosts, the hours away—
Long live Clopin, King of Thune!
Vagrants all of Paris gay!

CLAUDE FROLLO (aside, behind a pillar, in a corner of the stage. He is enveloped in a great cloak, which hides a priestly habit).

Amid this shameful mummery
What boots it that one soul doth sigh!
Ah! flame ne'er roared more angrily,
In the volcano's seething heart.

(Esmeralda enters dancing.)

CHORUS.

She comes! she comes! 't is she! 't is Esmeralda!

CLAUDE FROLLO (aside).

'T is she! ah! yes, 't is she!
Oh! wherefore, cruel fate,
Hast thou made her so fair to see,
And me so desolate?

(She dances to the centre of the stage. The vagrants gather admiringly in a circle about her. She dances.)

ESMERALDA.

An orphan am I,
The child of misfortune,
And flowers I strew
As among you I glide,
My rollicking humor
Oft covers a sigh,
My face wears a smile,
And the tear-drops I hide.

I dance, lowly maiden,
Through highway and by-way:
My song babbles on
Like the song of a bird.
A white dove am I
That falls to earth wounded.
In the dark night of death
Is my childhood interred.

CHORUS.

Dance on, maiden fair!
Our hearts thou dost soften.
Take us for thy kindred,
With us sport and play,
As the swallow in summer
Doth skim o'er the ocean,
Beat lightly the wave-tops
And scatter the spray.

Behold the fair maiden,
The child of misfortune!
When sparkle her glances
Farewell the sad hour!
We flock to her singing;
She seems in the gloaming
A honey-bee poised
On the edge of a flower.

Dance on, maiden fair,
Our hearts thou dost soften.
Take us for thy kindred,
With us sport and play!

CLAUDE FROLLO (aside).

Nay, maiden, beware
Of the priest's jealousy!

(Claude seeks to approach Esmeralda, who turns away from him in terror. Enters the procession of the Fools' Pope. Torches, lanterns and music. In the centre of the procession is Quasimodo, coped and mitred, and borne upon a litter surrounded with candles.)

CHORUS.

Salute him, clerks of the *basoche!*
Yokels and outlaws, hail the cope!
With loud acclaim, hail his approach,
Bow down to the Fools' Pope!

CLAUDE FROLLO. (He espies Quasimodo, and rushes toward him with a wrathful gesture.)

Quasimodo ! what mummery is this ?
O profanation ! Hither, Quasimodo !

QUASIMODO.

Great God ! What do I hear ?

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Hither, I say !

QUASIMODO (leaping down from the litter).

Behold me !

CLAUDE.

My curse on thee !

QUASIMODO.

Great God ! 't is he !

CLAUDE.

Base villainy !

QUASIMODO.

O fatal day !

CLAUDE.

To thy knees, knave !

QUASIMODO.

Forgive thy slave !

CLAUDE.

A charge I have!

QUASIMODO.

Forgive me, pray!

(Claude tears off Quasimodo's pontifical ornaments, and tramples upon them. The vagrants, at whom he glances angrily, begin to mutter, and form threatening groups around him.)

THE VAGRANTS.

O comrades, he
Doth threaten us,
Here where the knee
Bows down to us.

QUASIMODO.

What mean these thieves?
Audacity!
They dare to threaten him,
But we shall see!

CLAUDE FROLLO.

O race unclean!
They threaten me,
The thieving dogs and Jews!
But we shall see!

(The anger of the vagrants breaks out.)

THE VAGRANTS.

Hold! hold! hold!
Death to the marplot bold!
With his head he 'll pay tenfold!
In vain will he offer fight!

QUASIMODO.

His head must sacred be!
Your impious hands hold ye,
Or your riotous jubilee,
I 'll change to a bloody fight!

CLAUDE FROLLO.

It is not for his head
That Frollo's prayers are said.

(He places his hand upon his breast.)

Here rages the tempest dread,
Here rages the murd'rous fight!

(As the anger of the vagrants is about to go beyond words, Clopin Trouillefou appears at the back of the stage.)

CLOPIN.

Who dares to assail, in this infamous lair,
The archdeacon, my master,
And Quasimodo, the bell-ringer
Of Notre-Dame?

THE VAGRANTS (stopping where they stand).

'T is Clopin, our king!

CLOPIN.

Away with you, varlets!

THE VAGRANTS.

We needs must obey.

CLOPIN.

Go, leave us!

(The vagrants retire to the neighboring hovels. The Court of Miracles is deserted. Clopin approaches Claude with an air of mystery.)

SCENE II

CLAUDE FROLLO, QUASIMODO, CLOPIN TROUILLEFOU.

CLOPIN.

What motive led you to join in this revelry?
Monseigneur, is there aught that you would
have me do?
You are my master in the magic art.
Speak; I will do thy bidding.

CLAUDE. (He seizes Clopin's arm impulsively, and leads him to the front of the stage.)

The die is cast. Now listen.

CLOPIN.

Monseigneur?

CLAUDE FROLLO.

More than ever I do love her.
Thou seest how I quiver with my love and
agony.
She must be mine this very night!

CLOPIN.

You 'll see her pass this way a moment hence;
So must she turn to reach her home.

CLAUDE FROLLO (aside).

Ah! hell lays hold on me!

(Aloud.)

Soon, didst thou say?

CLOPIN.

Straightway.

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Alone?

CLOPIN.

Alone.

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Enough.

CLOPIN.

And shall you wait?

CLAUDE FROLLO.

I shall. God grant that I possess her, or else die!

CLOPIN.

Can I in aught serve you?

CLAUDE FROLLO.

No.

(He motions to Clopin to withdraw, after tossing him his purse. Remaining alone with Quasimodo, he leads him to the front of the stage.)

Come, I have need of thee.

QUASIMODO.

'T is well.

CLAUDE FROLLO.

'T is for an impious, abominable, frightful thing.

QUASIMODO.

You are my lord.

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Imprisonment, death, and the outraged law,
We defy all of these.

QUASIMODO.

Rely on me.

CLAUDE FROLLO (impetuously).

I 'll carry off this gipsy maid !

QUASIMODO.

Master, take my blood—nor tell me why.

(At a sign from Claude, Quasimodo walks to the back of the stage, and leaves his master alone in front.)

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Oh, Heaven ! to have bartered my soul to the devil,
To have tried all that magic can teach one of evil,

To have fallen far lower than hell's depths
are low;
I, a priest, lie in wait for a woman at night!
And to think, in my lost soul's pitiful plight,
That God's eye is on me e'en now!

Ah well! does it matter?
I 'm borne on by destiny;
Its hand is too strong,
And I yield to its law.
My new life begins!
The priest folly-ridden
Has no more of hope
And no more of awe.
O demon, corrupter!
Evoked by my books,
If thou giv'st her to me
I vow I am thine!
'Neath thy wing take then
The shepherd unfaithful!
In hell with this maiden
All heaven is mine!

Come then, thou maiden!
I do claim thee for mine!
Come, be mine for all time!

Since God, the omnipotent,
Whose glance day and night
Doth search out our hearts,
Requires, in his might,
The priest to make choice
Betwixt heaven and love!

QUASIMODO (returning).

Master, the time draws nigh.

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Yes, 't is the solemn hour, when my fate 's to be decided: peace!

CLAUDE FROLLO and QUASIMODO.

Dark is the night,
Footsteps I hear:
In shadow lurking,
Someone draws near.

(They walk to the rear of the stage to listen.)

THE WATCH (passing behind the houses).

Peace and vigilance!
Noiselessly open we
Ears to the silence
And eyes to the gloom.

CLAUDE and QUASIMODO.

In darkness advancing
Upon us they steal.
Now let us keep silent,
'T is the guard at our heel!

(The song of the watch grows faint in the distance.)

QUASIMODO.

The watch has gone by.

CLAUDE.

Our fears with them fly.

(They both look anxiously toward the street through which Esmeralda should come.)

QUASIMODO.

Love counseleth,
Hope maketh strong
Him who doth watch
The whole night long.
I feel her presence,
I see her near;
O maid divine,
Come without fear!

CLAUDE.

Love counseleth,
Hope maketh strong

Him who doth watch
The whole night long.
I feel thy presence,
Maid divine!
Thy form I see:
She 's mine! she 's mine!

(Esmeralda enters. They rush upon her and try to drag her away. She struggles.)

ESMERALDA.

Help! rescue! rescue! save me!

CLAUDE and QUASIMODO.

Peace, girl! be still!

SCENE III

ESMERALDA, QUASIMODO, PHŒBUS DE CHATEAUPERS, and ARCHERS OF THE NIGHT PATROL.

PHŒBUS (entering at the head of a squad of archers).

In the king's name!

(In the confusion Claude makes his escape. The archers seize Quasimodo.)

PHŒBUS (to the archers, pointing to Quasimodo).

Arrest him! hold him fast!
Be he nobleman or valet!
We 'll straightway, for safe keeping,
Place him fast in the Châtelet.

(The archers lead Quasimodo to the back of the stage. Esmeralda, recovered from her fright, approaches Phœbus with curiosity mingled with admiration, and leads him forward to the footlights.)

ESMERALDA.

Deign, I pray,
Your name to say,
Kind sir, to me!

PHŒBUS.

Phœbus, child—
And Chateaupers
My family.

ESMERALDA.

Captain?

PHŒBUS.

Yes, my queen.

ESMERALDA.

Queen? nay, nay!

PHŒBUS.

Pardon, pray!

ESMERALDA.

Phœbus, I love your name!

PHŒBUS.

Dear madame,
On my word,
I 've a sword
Known to fame!

ESMERALDA.

A captain superb,
A warrior gay,
With his corselet of steel
And his swaggering way,

Too oft, my fair sir,
Steals a heart with his sighs,
And cruelly laughs
At our tear-bedewed eyes.

PHŒBUS (aside).

For a captain superb,
For a warrior gay,
Love cannot endure
Throughout a whole day.
A soldier desires
Every flower he spies;
Pleasure, not penalty,
Love without sighs.

(To Esmeralda.)

A spark
That beguiles,
On me smiles
From thine eyes.

ESMERALDA.

A captain superb,
A warrior gay,
With his corselet of steel
And his swaggering way,

When he bursts on the sight
Of an innocent maid,
For many a day,
Fills her heart and her head.

PHŒBUS (aside).

For a captain superb,
For a warrior gay,
Love cannot endure
Throughout a whole day.
'T is a flash in the dark.
Every beautiful maid
Who falls in his way
Must be courted—not wed.

ESMERALDA. (She strikes an attitude in front of the captain and gazes admiringly at him.)

Seigneur Phœbus, let me eye you,
And your charms with joy behold!
Oh! the lovely silken kerchief,
Lovely scarf with fringe of gold!

(Phœbus takes off his scarf and presents it to her.)

PHŒBUS.

Does it please thee?

ESMERALDA (taking the scarf and arraying herself in it).

Ah! how lovely!

PHŒBUS.

Prithee, stay!

(He approaches her and tries to kiss her.)

ESMERALDA (recoiling).

No! in pity!

PHŒBUS (persisting).

Let me kiss thee!

ESMERALDA (still recoiling).

No, I say!

PHŒBUS (laughing).

A fair
So unfair
Not to care!
Charming!

ESMERALDA.

Nay, gallant captain,
I needs must refuse;
For with one little kiss,
Who knows what I may lose?

PHŒBUS.

A captain am I,
And my kiss I 'll not lose.
My beautiful gipsy,
Why need you refuse?
A kiss! give me a kiss, or I 'll take it!

ESMERALDA.

No, leave me; I 'll not listen to it.

PHŒBUS.

Just one kiss! 'faith, 't is nothing at all!

ESMERALDA.

Not to you, but to me all in all!

PHŒBUS.

Thou 'lt see if I do love thee, if thou look'st upon me.

ESMERALDA.

I dare not look upon myself, much less on thee.

PHŒBUS.

To-night love seeks admission to thy heart.

ESMERALDA.

Yes, love to-night, to-morrow sorrow's smart !

(She eludes his embrace and runs away. Phœbus, discomfited, returns to Quasimodo, who is bound and under guard at the back of the stage.)

PHŒBUS.

She shrinks from me and takes to flight.
A fine reward for all my pains !
I keep the more mournful of two birds of night :
The nightingale flies, and the night-owl remains.

(He resumes his place at the head of his men, and they march off, taking Quasimodo with them.)

CHORUS OF THE PATROL.

Peace and vigilance !
Noiselessly open we
Ears to the silence
And eyes to the gloom.

(They gradually pass off the stage and disappear.)

ACT SECOND

SCENE I

The Place de Grève. The pillory. Quasimodo in the pillory. The populace upon the square.

CHORUS.

He carried off a maid!
What! Can it be?
The forfeit must be paid
In the pillory.
Good gossips, pray observe;
Quasimodo
Dared to poach in the preserve
Of Dan Cupido!

A WOMAN OF THE PEOPLE.

My street he will pass through,
Returning from the stocks,
And Pierrat Torterue
Will call us forth in flocks.

THE CRIER.

The king, God keep him! doth command,
That this man who is here at hand,
Well guarded, presently shall stand
An hour in the pillory!

CHORUS.

For shame! for shame!
The hump-backed, one-eyed hound!
Barabbas is his name!
How he blinks and stares around!
Down with the wizard!
He kicks and he scowls!
Every dog in the street
At the sight of him howls!
Flog him well, the rascal cut-purse!
Ply the lash, and fine him too!

QUASIMODO.

Water, pray!

CHORUS.

Be hanged to you!

QUASIMODO.

Water! water!

CHORUS.

Be accursed!

(Esmeralda has appeared in the crowd some moments before. Her first impulse, at sight of Quasimodo, is surprise, which quickly gives place to compassion. Suddenly, amid the shouts of the populace, she ascends the platform of the pillory, takes a small gourd from her belt, and gives Quasimodo water.)

CHORUS.

Quasimodo let be!
What dost thou, my daughter?
To Beelzebub broiling
Thou shouldst not give water!

(She goes down from the pillory. The archers unbind Quasimodo and lead him away.)

CHORUS.

He carried off a dame!
Who? yon blockhead?
'T is a frightful, burning shame!
Yes, 't is too bad.
Good gossips, pray observe;
Quasimodo
Dared to poach in the preserve
Of Dan Cupido.

SCENE II

A magnificent apartment, in which preparations for a fête are in progress.

PHŒBUS, FLEUR-DE-LYS, MADAME ALOISE DE GONDELAURIER.

MADAME ALOISE.

I love you well, Phœbus, my son that will be,
Act master to-night, and hospitably see,
I prithee, each guest well bestowed and well pleased.
And you, my fair child, array you in state,
For you 'll look the loveliest of all at the fête,
And be the most joyous, my dear.

(She walks to the back of the stage and gives orders to the servants, who are arranging the apartment for the fête.)

FLEUR-DE-LYS.

Monsieur, within the week that 's past
Our eyes on you but twice we 've cast,
This fête doth bring you here at last.
At last! 't is rare good fortune, truly!

PHŒBUS.

Nay, I beseech you, scold me not!

FLEUR-DE-LYS.

Ah! Phœbus, confess, I am forgot!

PHŒBUS.

I swear . . .

FLEUR-DE-LYS.

Swear not to me!
One swears when one doth lie.

PHŒBUS.

Forget you! folly rarest!
For are you not the fairest?
Could lover be more warm than I?

(Aside.)

How my fair fiancée
Upbraideth me!
Doubt in her mind holds sway.
Deadly *ennui!*
Sweethearts, the swains you scold,
Seek other dears:
Bright smiles bring fairer fruits,
Than sighs and tears.

FLEUR-DE-LYS (aside).

False to his fiancée,
His utterly!

Who have naught else, no way
Forth from *ennui*.
Here though he be or gone,
Still my heart fears!
Present, my joy he flouts,
Absent, my tears!

(To Phœbus.)

Phœbus, the scarf I lately made you,
What have you done with it? I see you wear it not.

PHŒBUS (embarrassed).

The scarf? I do not know . . .

(Aside.)

Mordieu! what a blunder!

FLEUR-DE-LYS.

You have forgotten it!

(Aside.)

To whom can he have given it?
For whom am I forsaken?

MADAME ALOISE (returning to them, and seeking to adjust their difference).

Mon Dieu! pray get you married; do your sulking afterward.

PHŒBUS (to Fleur-de-Lys).

Nay, I have not forgotten, I now recall
I folded it with care, and laid it by
In an enamel case expressly made.

(Passionately, to Fleur-de-Lys, who is still pouting.)

I swear to Heaven that you to me
Are dearer than Venus e'er could be.

FLEUR-DE-LYS.

Nay, swear not! Spare your oaths, say I!
Men only swear when they would lie.

MADAME ALOISE.

Nay, children, quarrel not to-day, when all is joy.
My daughter, come, we must go greet our guests,
For they will soon be here. Everything in its turn.

(To the servants.)

Go, make all ready for the ball, the torches light,
'T is my desire that it shall be a lovely sight,
Till one may think it noon, the halls make bright.

PHŒBUS.

Since we have Fleur-de-Lys, naught will be lacking.

FLEUR-DE-LYS.

Phœbus, love will lacking be!

(Exeunt Fleur-de-Lys and Madame Aloise.)

PHŒBUS (looking after Fleur-de-Lys).

True it is, with Fleur-de-Lys
My heart is sad and full of heavy care.
My love, on whom my thoughts do ever dwell,
Alas! alas! she is not here!

Thou beauteous maiden,
Thine, thine is my heart!
O fair dancing vision,
My whole life thou art,
Forever appearing
Though ever apart!

She is as radiant and fair,
As a flower amid the moss is,
As a nest built high in air,
As a blessing 'mid life's crosses.

Spotless soul, so pure and free,
Virgin proud, but maiden lowly,
Virtue beaming in her eye
Banishes all thought unholy.

When the sky is storm-ridden
And dark is the night,
Like an angel's from heaven
Her eyes give forth light.

Sometimes gladsome, sometimes drear,
Ceaselessly I see her face.
But cloud or star, howe'er I see her,
'T is heaven always is the place.

Thou beauteous maiden,
Thine, thine is my heart!
O fair dancing vision,
My whole life thou art,
Forever appearing,
Though ever apart!

(Enter several ladies and gentlemen in gala attire.)

SCENE III

THE SAME: VICOMTE DE GIF, M. DE MORLAIX, M. DE CHEVREUSE, MADAME DE GONDELAURIER, FLEUR-DE-LYS, DIANE, BÉRANGÈRE, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

VICOMTE DE GIF.

Hail, noble chatelaines!

MADAME ALOISE, PHŒBUS, FLEUR-DE-LYS (bowing).

Noble chevalier, good-morrow!
Beneath this hospitable roof,
Forget your care and sorrow!

M. DE MORLAIX.

Mesdames, God bestow on you
Happiness, health and pleasure!

MADAME ALOISE, PHŒBUS, FLEUR-DE-LYS.

May Heaven, my lord, repay to you,
Good wishes in full measure!

M. DE CHEVREUSE.

Mesdames, in my heart of hearts,
As I am God's, so yours am I.

MADAME ALOISE, PHŒBUS, FLEUR-DE-LYS.

Fair sir, Our Lady we implore
In every place your guide to be !

(Enter all the guests.)

CHORUS.

Come all to the fête !
Lord, lady and knight !
Come all to the fête
With flower-crowned pate,
Hearts with joy bedight !

(The guests exchange greetings. Servants pass to and fro amid the throng carrying salvers laden with flowers and fruit. Meanwhile a number of young ladies have formed a group near á window at the right. Suddenly one of them calls to the others and motions to them to look out of the window.)

DIANE (looking out of the window).

O Bérangère, come quickly, pray ! oh ! come and look !

BÉRANGÈRE (looking into the street).

How light of foot she is ! how agile !

DIANE.

She 's a fairy, surely, or she 's Love in person !

VICOMTE DE GIF (laughing).

Love dancing in the public squares !

M. DE CHEVREUSE (after looking out).

Good lack! it is the sorceress!
Phœbus, it is thy gipsy girl, whom thou didst save
So gallantly from ribald hands the other night.

VICOMTE DE GIF.

Yes, 't is the gipsy!

M. DE MORLAIX.

She is beautiful as day!

DIANE (to Phœbus).

If you do know her,
Bid her come, and with some wizard's trick regale us.

PHŒBUS (looking out, in his turn, with an air of distraction).

It well may happen it is she.
(To M. de Gif.)
Dost think she will remember me?

FLEUR-DE-LYS (who is watching and listening).

To see you once is to remember you always.
Come, call her, prithee bid her come.
(Aside.)
I 'll see if what the gossips say must be believed.

PHŒBUS (to Fleur-de-Lys).

You wish it? Be it so; I can but try.

(He motions to the dancer to enter the house.)

THE YOUNG WOMEN.

She comes!

M. DE CHEVREUSE.

Beneath the porch she 's disappeared.

DIANE.

See how bewildered she has left the people yonder!

VICOMTE DE GIF.

Ladies, prepare to see the fairy from the street.

FLEUR-DE-LYS (aside).

How quickly she did come at Phœbus' sign!

SCENE IV

THE SAME: ESMERALDA.

(Enters the gipsy, shy, bewildered, but with radiant face. Instinctive murmur of admiration. The guests stand aside to make way for her.)

CHORUS.

Behold! her fair brow mid the fairest shines bright,
Like a beauteous star amid tapers at night.

PHŒBUS.

Being divine beyond compare!
My friends, of this enchanting scene
She is the queen, the queen I swear,
Her crown her loveliness serene!

(He turns to MM. de Gif and de Chevreuse).

Ah! friends, my heart is all aflame!
War and misfortune I 'd defy,
Thy heart, bewitching fay, to tame,
And win thy budding love,—or die!

M. DE CHEVREUSE.

Her face is most divinely fair!
In blissful dreams the like I 've seen

Come floating through the darkened air,
And sowing light where gloom has been,
Born in the streets, without a name.
Blind are thy jests, O misery!
Alas! that in the paths of shame
So fair a flower must live and die!

ESMERALDA (gazing at Phœbus, where he stands in the throng).

Yes, 't is my Phœbus, he stands there,
As I have seen him in my heart,
Ah! whether silk or armor he wear,
Graceful and comely is his part.
Phœbus, my brain is all aflame!
With grief and joy consumed am I.
E'en as the soil needs dew, the same
My heart needs tears, must weep or die!

FLEUR-DE-LYS.

Ah! well I knew that she was fair!
Most jealous, truly, of the quean
I 'd be, did I my envy care
To measure by her beauty's sheen!
But mayhap fate will mete the same
Harsh measure in our misery
To both, and both by the same flame
Be withered in our bloom and die!

MADAME ALOISE.

Really, the creature 's passing fair!
A stranger thing was never seen,
Than that a gipsy jade should dare
To vie in grace with any queen!
But destiny plays many a game!
Th' envenomed reptile frequently
Beneath the shrub with bloom aflame
Doth hide his fangs from every eye!

ALL (together).

As beautiful and calm to see,
As a fair summer eve is she!

MADAME ALOISE (to Esmeralda).

Come hither, child, come, pretty one,
Come here, and one of thy strange dances dance for us.

(Esmeralda prepares to dance, and takes from her bosom the scarf given her by Phœbus.)

FLEUR-DE-LYS.

My scarf!—Ah! Phœbus, thou basely hast deceived me,
And she 's my rival!

(Fleur-de-Lys snatches the scarf from Esmeralda, and falls in a swoon. All the guests advance threateningly upon the gipsy, who flies to Phœbus for protection.)

ALL.

Phœbus loves her! Can it be?
Hence, vile creature! fly!
Great is thy audacity,
Us thus to defy!
O monstrous impudence!
Back to the streets you go,
And with thy jig entrance
The faubourg crew!
Expel, expel the jade!
Out with her! instantly!
So lowly born a maid
To dare to look so high!

ESMERALDA.

Be thou my guardian;
Phœbus, defend thou me!
The poor Bohemian
Has no hope save in thee.

PHŒBUS.

I love her, and her alone!
Thus do I take her part;
I 'll fight for her, for her, my own,
My arm goes with my heart,

If support she need,
Mine all her woes to share!
Her wounds make my heart bleed,
Her honor is my care!

ALL.

Lo, he doth love the jade!
Out with her! out with her!
Why, 't is a gipsy maid,
He doth prefer!
Ah! prithee, silence both
On such a love as this!

(To Phœbus.)

In you 't is insolence!

(To Esmeralda.)

In thee, pure wantonness!

(Phœbus and his friends protect the gipsy, who totters toward the door, followed by threatening words from all Madame de Gondelaurier's guests. The curtain falls.)

ACT THIRD

An enclosed space outside a wine-shop. The wine-shop at the right. Trees at the left. At the rear a door and a very low wall. In the distance is seen the roof of Notre-Dame with its two towers and its arrow, and a silhouette of old Paris standing out against the sky, reddened by the rays of the setting sun. The Seine flows at the foot of the picture.

SCENE I

PHŒBUS, VICOMTE DE GIF, M. DE MORLAIX, M. DE CHEVREUSE, and several other friends of Phœbus, seated at tables, drinking and singing; afterward DON CLAUDE FROLLO.

CHORUS.

Gracious and indulgent be,
Notre-Dame de Saint-Lô,
To the warrior bold and free,
Who, save water, has no foe!

PHŒBUS.

Unto the brave
Where'er they rise
Good wine give,
And fairest eyes!

Lucky blade!
Take the maid,
Take the red
Vintage prize!

Should a dame,
Cruel fair,
His bold flame
Cease to share,
He but chaffs
Her, and laughs,
Sings, and quaffs
To banish care.

Drunk or no,
When day 's done,
Kiss your Jo
Just for fun!
Without dread,
Go to bed
With your head
On a gun.

And the heart,
Which so oft
Cupid's dart
Maketh soft,

Is content
If the tent
Flutter gent-
Ly aloft.

CHORUS.

Gracious and indulgent be,
Notre-Dame de Saint-Lô,
To the warrior bold and free,
Who, save water, has no foe!

(Enters Claude Frollo, who takes his seat at a table at some distance from Phœbus, and seems at first not to notice what is going on about him.)

VICOMTE DE GIF (to Phœbus).

What hast thou done with the bewitching gipsy, pray?

(Claude Frollo starts and listens.)

PHŒBUS.

I have a tryst with her to-night, within the hour.

ALL.

Is 't so?

PHŒBUS.

'T is so!

(Claude Frollo's excitement seems to increase.)

VICOMTE DE GIF.

Within the hour?

PHŒBUS.

But a moment hence.
O love, supremest happiness!
Two hearts that beat in unison!
Mine own beloved to possess:
Victor and slave to be in one!
Her heart, her budding charms to know;
Her song, which fills the soul with bliss;
Her lovely eyes whence tear-drops flow,
Which one can banish with a kiss!

(While he sings, the others are drinking and clinking their glasses together.)

CHORUS.

'T is bliss beyond compare,
Whate'er the world may think,
To drink to her we hold most dear,
To love the wine we drink!

PHŒBUS.

Fairest of all is she,
Her charm 's divine!
O bliss! O ecstasy!
Friends, she is mine!

CLAUDE FROLLO (aside).

Satan's henceforth I 'll be.
Woe be hers and thine!

PHŒBUS.

Pleasure is beckoning!
Life's best gifts from above
Spend we unreckoning
In one sweet instant of love!
What matter that we all must die!
An hour for a century!
And for a day, eternity!

(The curfew tolls. Phœbus and his friends rise from the table, resume their swords, hats and cloaks, and prepare to go.)

CHORUS.

Phœbus, the hour calls thee:
Hark! 't is the curfew-bell.
Go thou and join thy beauty.
God keep thee safe and well!

PHŒBUS.

True 't is the hour calls me;
Yes, 't is the curfew-bell.
I go to join my beauty.
God keep you safe and well!

(Exeunt Phœbus' friends.)

SCENE II

CLAUDE FROLLO, PHŒBUS.

CLAUDE FROLLO (detaining Phœbus, as he 's about to take his leave).

Captain !

PHŒBUS.

What man is this ?

CLAUDE FROLLO.

A word with you.

PHŒBUS.

Out with it quickly !

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Know you her name, who doth
Await you at the rendezvous to-night ?

PHŒBUS.

Pardieu ! I do ; she is my light o' love,
Who loves me well, and pleases me no less.
She is my songstress and my dancing-girl ;
Her name is Esmeralda.

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Nay, her name is death.

PHŒBUS.

Friend, firstly you are mad; and secondly,
The devil take you!

CLAUDE FROLLO.

List.

PHŒBUS.

What matters it to me?

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Phœbus, if you do cross the threshold of yon
door . . .

PHŒBUS.

You 're mad!

CLAUDE FROLLO.

You are a dead man!
Tremble! she 's a gipsy maid!
They hide their hate beneath love's breath;
Nor e'er remorse, nor law they dread,
Their couch is as a couch of death!

PHŒBUS (laughing).

My friend, pray rearrange your cape.
Return you to the fool's retreat,
From which it seems you did escape.
May Jupiter, Saint Æsculap—
Ius and the devil guide your feet!

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Faithless Jezebels are they,
Else doth public rumor lie,
Around them all is mystery.
Go thither, Phœbus, and thou 'lt die!

(Claude Frollo's persistence seems to disturb Phœbus, who gazes uneasily at him.)

PHŒBUS.

My wonder
Doth engender
Doubt, not of my seeking.
This city,
'T is pity,
With treachery is reeking.

CLAUDE FROLLO.

His wonder
Broadens under
Suspicion roused by me.
Any clown
In the town
Could have scented treachery.

Monseigneur, O heed! the siren evade,
Whose snare for you is set.
For many a strolling gipsy jade

In her hate has stricken dead
A heart to love in debt.

(Phœbus, as Claude tries to lead him away, changes his mind and repulses him.)

PHŒBUS.

Gone mad am I too?
Moor, Gipsy or Jew,
What matters it who,
For love includes all.
Love calls me; away!
Ah! if death be my pay
'T is a guerdon so gay
It were blissful to fall!

CLAUDE (detaining him).

Stay! a gipsy! go to!
Thy folly thou 'lt rue!
Dar'st thyself to undo,
To thy ruin to fly?
From the faithless maid flee,
Who doth beckon to thee.
What, thou 'lt go? Can it be?
Go, then, go thou and die!

(Phœbus runs off the stage, despite Claude's efforts to detain him. Claude stands for a moment, knitting his brows, as if undecided what course to adopt; then follows Phœbus.)

SCENE III

A room. At the back of the stage a window looking upon the river.

(CLOPIN TROUILLEFOU enters, torch in hand; he is accompanied by a number of men, to whom he makes signs, implying an understanding with them; then he stations them in a dark corner, where they are out of sight; he then returns to the door, and apparently signals to some one below. DON CLAUDE FROLLO appears.)

CLOPIN (to Claude).

From this place you can see, unseen yourself,
The captain and the gipsy.

(He points to a recess behind a curtain.)

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Are the men ready at their stations?

CLOPIN.

They are ready.

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Let no one ever know the source of this.
Silence! and take this purse. As much more you
Shall have when all is done.

(Claude takes his place in the recess, Clopin stealthily goes off. Enter Esmeralda and Phœbus.)

CLAUDE FROLLO (aside).

O beauteous maid,
Seek not fate to evade!
Lo! how fair she 's arrayed,
Who shall go hence in weeds.

ESMERALDA (to Phœbus).

My heart, good my lord,
Is my own, on my word;
But with pride it is stored,
And with shame it still bleeds!

PHŒBUS (to Esmeralda).

Oh! fair as the rose is!
Love, when the door closes,
At the threshold reposes
All fear, when love pleads.

(Phœbus gently forces Esmeralda to a seat on the bench beside him.)

PHŒBUS.

Dost love me?

ESMERALDA.

Yes, I love thee!

CLAUDE FROLLO (aside).

Hell and fury!

PHŒBUS.

Thou fascinating creature ! By my soul,
You are divine !

ESMERALDA.

Your mouth is a sad flatterer ! See how
I blush for very shame ! Monseigneur, pray
Come not so near to me !

CLAUDE FROLLO.

They love each other ! how I envy them !

ESMERALDA.

Phœbus, to you I owe my life !

PHŒBUS.

And I to thee owe all my happiness !

ESMERALDA.

Be discreet,
Pray, and greet
With a sweet,
Cheery face
The poor maid,
Who 's afraid
And dismayed
'Neath thy gaze !

PHŒBUS.

O my queen,
My siren,
Sovereign
Of beauty!
Sweetest child
Whose eye mild
Beams, unbeguiled
Of duty!

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Hear them, hear!
Mark how near!
She full dear,
So comely he!
Happy slave,
Loving knave,
I but crave
To die—or flee.

PHŒBUS.

Maid or fay,
Mine be pray!
Night and day
I do love.

Quench my fire!
I desire,
Yearn, aspire,
O my dove!

ESMERALDA.

My heart strays
In a maze,
All ablaze
With love's delight,
'T is a lyre,
Fairest sire,
Taught desire
Day and night!

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Stay, fair maid,
Till my head
And my blade
Their worth prove!
Lo! their smile
Doth beguile
Me the while,
And their love!

PHŒBUS.

Fresh and rosy be thou ever;
Laugh we at our happy lot,
At our love which sleepeth never,
At modesty, which waketh not.
Thy ruby lips are very heaven;
There my heart would seek its bliss,
May my latest breath, God-given,
Exhale in this one kiss!

ESMERALDA.

Soft to me is thy voice ever;
Sweet thy smile, of love begot;
Heedlessness, which laughs forever
In thine eyes, beguiles my thought.
My laws thy wishes are, God-given,
But I should steel my heart 'gainst this;
For virtue, joy and hope of heaven,
Would vanish in one kiss!

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Footsteps of death, approaching ever,
Strike not their ears, with love distraught.
My jealous hatred flames to fever
While their blind love feareth naught.

Death, gaunt and pallid death, O Heaven!
Steps in to wreck their fleeting bliss.
Phœbus, thy latest breath, God-given,
Exhales in that one kiss!

(Claude rushes upon Phœbus and stabs him, then opens the window at the back, through which he disappears. Esmeralda with a loud shriek throws herself on Phœbus' body. The men rush out noisily from their hiding place, lay hold of her, and with gestures accuse her of the assault. The curtain falls.)

ACT FOURTH

A dungeon. A door at the back of the stage.

SCENE I

ESMERALDA (alone, laden with chains, lying upon a bunch of straw).

Alas ! he in the tomb, and I in this vile den !
He foully murdered, I a prisoner !
Ah ! yes, I saw him fall. He 's dead, he 's dead !
And God in heaven ! this crime—and such a crime !—
And I it was, they say, who did commit it !
Snapped is the stalk whereon our lives made bud ;
Broken though green. Phœbus has gone before
To point the path. But yesterday his grave was dug,
And mine will ope to-morrow !

O Phœbus, in the world so wide,
Doth the power nowhere abide
To succor them who have loved well?
Know'st thou of no phylactery
To dry the tear-suffused eye;
Sealed eyes to open, know'st no spell?

Just God, to thee I pray,
To thee, enthroned above;
Deign thou to take my life away,
Or let me cease to love!

O Phœbus, open wings and fly
To realms of immortality,
Where love doth live for evermore!
Hence, let us wander through the gloom,
Our bodies buried in the tomb,
Our souls upon the heavenly shore!

Just God, to thee I pray,
To thee enthroned above:
Deign thou to take my life away,
Or let me cease to love!

(The door opens. Claude Frollo enters, lamp in hand, with his hood pulled down over his face. He stands, motionless, in front of Esmeralda.)

ESMERALDA (springing to her feet).

What man is this?

CLAUDE FROLLO (his face concealed by his hood).

A priest.

ESMERALDA.

A priest! Here is some mystery!

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Are you prepared?

ESMERALDA.

For what?

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Prepared to die.

ESMERALDA.

I am.

CLAUDE FROLLO.

'T is well.

ESMERALDA.

Will it be soon? Good father, answer me.

CLAUDE FROLLO.

To-morrow.

ESMERALDA.

But why not to-day?

CLAUDE FROLLO.

To-day! Pray, are you in such agony?

ESMERALDA.

Ah! yes, my suffering is horrible!

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Perchance I, who am not to die to-morrow,
Suffer more than you.

ESMERALDA.

You suffer ! who are you ?

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Between us yawns the tomb.

ESMERALDA.

Your name ?

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Is it your wish to know it ?

ESMERALDA.

Yes.

(He raises his hood.)

The priest ! it is the priest ! O God in heaven !
It is in truth his icy brow and flaming glance !
He doth pursue me without respite, day and night !
'T was he who slew my Phœbus, my own love !
I 'll curse you, monster, with my latest breath !
For, what in God's name have I done to you ?

What is your purpose? villain, murderer!
Why do you hate me?

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Nay, I love thee!
I love thee—O horror!
Self-loathing I love thee!
My love is my heart's blood:
My love 's life to me,
Yes, at thy feet I kneel,
Vowing thee this:
Fairer thy tomb to me
Than Paradise.
Pity! thy chains I wear,
Take back thy curse!

ESMERALDA.

He loves me! misery past belief!
I 'm in the base assassin's power!

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Except my love and bitter grief,
Naught lives within me at this hour!

O misery!
Why flout me so?
I love but thee!
O night of woe!

ESMERALDA.

Fatality!
My heart is dead!
God! he loves me!
O night of dread!

CLAUDE FROLLO (aside).

Helpless, she flutters in my power.
At last the priest shall have his turn!
Through me she fell on this dark hour;
I 'll guide her where the light doth burn.
Death, though he slink behind and cower,
Surely to love will her resign!

ESMERALDA.

In pity's name, speed, speed the hour!
Phœbus is dead, for death I pine.
Alas! I lose the vital power
Before such ghastly love as thine,
Even as the little bird doth cower
Beneath the vulture's glance malign!

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Accept me! How I love thee! Oh, come,
I conjure thee!
For pity! let us fly, while all else sleeps!

ESMERALDA.

Your prayer is an insult !

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Dost thou prefer to die ?

ESMERALDA.

The body dies, the soul takes flight.

CLAUDE FROLLO.

It is an awful thing to die !

ESMERALDA.

Peace, impure lips !
Your love makes death beautiful to think upon !

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Choose, choose ! 'T is Claude or death !

(He throws himself supplicatingly at Esmeralda's feet. She spurns him.)

ESMERALDA.

No, vile assassin ! silent be !
Thy dastard love insulteth me.
Rather the grave to which I flee !
Accursed be thou among th' accursed !

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Tremble ! the scaffold thee shall claim.
Beware—for in my heart I frame

Portentous schemes of blood and flame,
In hell's dark recesses rehearsed!

Oh! I adore thee,
Give, give thy hand;
The sun shall rise o'er thee,
Thy life shall expand.
O night of fears!
O night of remorse!
For me shall be tears
When thou art a corpse!
Wherefore, "I love thee,"
Then thou shalt see
The sun rise above thee
And thou shalt be free.

Ah! since in vain I thee implore,
And since thy hate doth shun my sight,
Farewell! thou hast but one day more,
Then everlasting night!

ESMERALDA.

Hence! I abhor thee,
Inhuman priest!
Crime hovers o'er thee,
Blood is thy feast!

O night of fears!
Night of remorse!
Die, bitter tears,
Die at your source!
Even from my chains
Take thou this curse!
Linger in pains
Down to thy hearse!

Go, for thy crime consumes thee:
But Phœbus leads me on!
The light of heaven illumes me,
For you black hell shall yawn.

(A jailer appears, Claude motions to him to take Esmeralda, and goes off the stage, while they are leading her away.)

SCENE II

The square in front of Notre-Dame. The façade of the church. The ringing of bells is heard.

QUASIMODO.

God above!
Lo, I love
All things well.
The soft air
Which dull care
Doth dispel.
Swallows bold
To the old
Roofs that cling.
Holy shrine
'Neath divine
Cross's wing.
Every flower
That doth bloom;
Every thing
That bates gloom!
Form awry,
Ugly I,

And uncouth,
Envied not!
Such my lot
In good sooth!
Joy or pain,
Storm or rain,
Or blue sky!
Every road
Leads to God;
What care I?

Ye bells, both great and small,
Ring on, forever ring!
Mingle your shrillest voices all,
And your deep muttering!
Hum loudly in your towers tall,
And in your turrets sing!

Hark the sound!
Clang of might
Deep and round
Day and night!

Noble our fêtes shall be,
Loud with your ringing cheer.
Turn, turn more rapidly,
Smite the glad atmosphere.

See the dull bourgeoisie
Flock to the bridges here!

Hark, there again!
The same refrain
Night and day!
Ne'er a fête
Were complete
Without this lay!

(He turns toward the front of the church.)

I saw the chapel walls were hung with black,
Alas! is some poor wretch to be brought hither?
God! what is this presentiment? No, no!
I will not think it so!

(Enter Claude and Clopin. They do not see Quasimodo.)

My master,—I will watch,—his face is very grim!

(He conceals himself in a dark corner of the great doorway.)

O Notre-Dame! my mistress dear!
Take my poor life, but his soul spare!

SCENE III

QUASIMODO, hiding; CLAUDE FROLLO, CLOPIN.

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Sayest thou Phœbus is at Montfort?

CLOPIN.

Monseigneur, he is not dead!

CLAUDE FROLLO.

God grant he comes not hither!

CLOPIN.

Have no fear on that score; he is far too weak,
So long a journey yet to undertake.
Were he to come 't would surely cause his death.
Monseigneur, doubt not that at every step
His wound would open. Fear naught for to-day.

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Ah! for this day at least, she 's mine alone;
'T is mine to say if she shall live or die!
Hell, I give thee to-morrow for to-day!

(To Clopin.)

Soon will the gipsy to this place be brought.
Dost thou remember all I bade thee do?
Be here upon the square with all thy men.

CLOPIN.

'T is well.

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Stand yonder in the shadow. If I cry:
"Help!" thou shalt come to me.

CLOPIN.

I will.

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Be not in number few.

CLOPIN.

And if you cry: "Help!"

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Yes.

CLOPIN.

I will hasten to her side,
And tear her from the grasp of the king's men.

CLAUDE FROLLO.

'T is well.

CLOPIN.

And then the beauty 's yours!

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Mingle you with the crowd,
Perchance her heart may something softer grow
To the poor priest. In that case, hasten all.

CLOPIN.

Yes, master.

CLAUDE FROLLO.

And stand close together.

CLOPIN.

Yes.

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Conceal your weapons, not to cause alarm.

CLOPIN.

Yes, master, you shall see.

CLAUDE FROLLO.

May Satan take her to himself
This very day,
If at this door the foolish elf
Doth say me nay!

O fate, O venture drear!
Friend, I rely on thee.
I contemplate with fear
The sole chance left to me.

CLOPIN.

Fear naught, though all seems drear,
My lord, rely on me,
Trust without any fear
The sole chance left to thee.

(They move away stealthily. The people begin to arrive upon the square.)

SCENE IV

THE PEOPLE, QUASIMODO: afterward ESMERALDA and her escort; then CLAUDE FROLLO, CLOPIN TROUILLEFOU, PRIESTS, ARCHERS, OFFICERS OF THE LAW; and lastly, PHŒBUS.

CHORUS.

To Notre-Dame
Come hither: fly
To see the maid
So soon to die!
This gipsy maid
Did murder, they say,
The finest captain
In the king's array!
What! can it be?
So fair to see,
And yet so vile!
'T is strange, good lack!
A soul so black,
So sweet a smile!
'T is dire to relate!
But little care we!
She goes to her fate,
Come quickly and see!

To Notre-Dame
Come hither : fly
To see the maid
So soon to die !

(The crowd increases. Great excitement. An ominous procession begins to file into the square. Long lines of black penitents. Banners of the Monks of Mercy. Torches, Archers, Officers of the law, and of the patrol. Troops make a lane through the crowd. Esmeralda appears, in her chemise, with a rope around her neck, bare-footed, and covered with an ample black crêpe shroud. Beside her stalks a monk with a crucifix. Behind her, executioners and troops. Quasimodo, leaning against a buttress, watches closely. As the victim arrives in front of the church, a solemn strain of music is heard from within the church, the doors of which are closed.)

CHORUS (in the church).

Omnes fluctus fluminis
Transierunt super me
In imo voraginis
Ubi plorant animæ.

(The singing slowly comes nearer. It finally bursts forth at the doors, which are suddenly thrown open, disclosing the interior of the church, apparently filled with a long procession of priests in their robes, preceded by banners. Claude Frollo, in sacerdotal costume, is at the head of the procession. He approaches the victim.)

THE PEOPLE.

Alive to-day, to-morrow lifeless clay!
Dear Lord, stretch out thy hand to her, we
pray!

ESMERALDA.

Hark! 't is Phœbus bids me come
To our everlasting home:
From God's wing no more to roam.
O blessed be my cruel doom!
Beneath this weary weight of woe
Hope to my breaking heart doth flow.
This day I part from all below,
To live again beyond the tomb!

CLAUDE FROLLO.

To die so young, and in her bloom!
To me, the faithless priest, must loom,
O God, a far more awful doom!
My torture threatens through the gloom!
Poor maid, unhappy child of woe,
Grasped in the power of thy foe,
Soon thou shalt leave this world below,
But I must moulder in the tomb!

THE PEOPLE.

Unfaithful, she must face her doom!
Heaven, that calls all chaste ones home,

Opes not its gates for her to come ;
Her tortures shall her heart consume !
Grim death ! O weary weight of woe !
With double chain doth hold her now :
Dead will she be to all below,
For her no life beyond the tomb.

(The procession draws near. Claude approaches Esmeralda.)

ESMERALDA (shuddering with terror).

It is the priest !

CLAUDE FROLLO (in an undertone).

Yes, it is I ! I love thee and implore,
Say but a word, and I can save thee yet.
Say : " I do love thee."

ESMERALDA.

Nay, I thee abhor !

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Die, then, if thou wilt ! I 'll follow thee straightway.

(He turns to the crowd.)

Friends, we consign this girl to the civil power.
May the breath of God at this sore hour,
Waft peace to her poor soul !

(As the officers are about to lay hands upon Esmeralda, Quasimodo leaps down into the square, pushes the archers aside, seizes Esmeralda in his arms, and rushes with her into the church.)

QUASIMODO.

Sanctuary! sanctuary!

THE PEOPLE.

Sanctuary! sanctuary!
Noël, townsmen, raise the cry!
Noël to the ringer brave!
O destiny!
Condemned was she:
The Lord doth save.
Down, gallows-tree!
The Lord doth give
The altar's shelter;
She shall live.
Hangmen, avaunt,
And ye, king's men!
Yon perch doth limit
The law's ken.
In this place all
Are changed by thee,
The angels' now
And God's is she!

CLAUDE FROLLO (commanding silence with a gesture).

She is not saved, she is a gipsy.
Notre-Dame can save none but a Christian.
Even at the altar pagans are proscribed.

(To the officers.)

In Monseigneur's name, the Bishop of Paris,
This impure woman I consign to you.

QUASIMODO (to the archers).

I will defend her, that I swear! so come not near!

CLAUDE FROLLO (to the archers).

You hesitate! Obey me instantly!
Tear from the holy place the gipsy maid.

(The archers go forward. Quasimodo takes his place between them and Esmeralda.)

QUASIMODO.

Nay, never!

A HORSEMAN (is heard without, riding at full speed, and shouting).

Stay!

(The crowd makes way.)

PHŒBUS (galloping upon the stage, pale, gasping for breath and exhausted, like one who has made a long journey).

Stay!

ESMERALDA.

Phœbus!

CLAUDE (aside, terrified).

Shattered are my schemes!

PHŒBUS (leaping from his horse).

Praise God! I breathe again. I come in time.
She is innocent, and here behold my assassin!

(He points to Claude Frollo.)

ALL.

Heaven! the priest!

PHŒBUS.

The priest alone is guilty: that I 'll prove.
Arrest him.

THE PEOPLE.

Wonder of wonders!

(The archers surround Claude.)

CLAUDE FROLLO.

God alone doth reign!

ESMERALDA.

Phœbus!

PHŒBUS.

My Esmeralda!

(They throw themselves into each other's arms.)

ESMERALDA.

Phœbus, my beloved! we shall live.

PHŒBUS.

Nay, thou wilt live.

ESMERALDA.

Our day of bliss has dawned at last.

THE PEOPLE.

Live both!

ESMERALDA.

Hear the glad shouts!
Receive the lowly maiden at thy feet.
Great Heaven! thou art so pale! What is it, pray?

PHŒBUS (staggering).

I die.

(She catches him in her arms. Anxious suspense among the people.)

Each step I took toward thee, my well-beloved,
Reopened my scarce healed wound. I chose
The tomb for my part, so that life were thine.
I die. Fate will avenge thee. Now I go
To see, my poor, sweet angel, if in heav'n
There 's aught so dear as thy dear love. Adieu!

(He dies.)

ESMERALDA.

Phœbus! he dies! thus in an instant all is changed!

(She falls upon his body.)

I follow thee into eternity!

CLAUDE FROLLO.

Fatality!

THE PEOPLE.

Fatality!

EDITION DEFINITIVE

NOTE

There is in existence, in manuscript, an outline of the libretto of *Esmeralda*, which differs notably, more especially at the end, from the poem as it was written. It may be interesting to give this outline (*scénario*) in this place.

ACT FIRST

SCENE I

The Court of Miracles. Great noise and tumult. A sort of festival of the vagrants. Claude Frollo is among the crowd, closely observant of what is going on. Esmeralda enters. The vagrants form a circle about her. She dances. While she dances, Claude Frollo sings in a corner, and the vagrants join in the chorus. Enters the procession of the Fools' Pope. The uproar redoubles. Scene between Claude Frollo and Quasimodo, as in the novel. Both go off the stage. The crowd disperses.

SCENE II

A street. It is dark. Claude Frollo and Quasimodo await Esmeralda's coming. The gipsy appears. They

both rush upon her. Phœbus arrives with his archers. The rest as in the novel.

SCENE III

The Place de Grève. Quasimodo in the pillory. The recluse in her cell. The people overwhelm Quasimodo with imprecations. Quasimodo cries: *Water!* The gipsy ascends and gives him water. The recluse curses the gipsy. The people echo her curse in chorus. Finale.

ACT SECOND

SCENE I

The Gondelaurier dwelling. A ball is in progress. Scene between Fleur-de-Lys and Phœbus. The gipsy appears. She dances and outshines all the other dancers. Phœbus pays court to her. Chagrin of the other young women and of Fleur-de-Lys, who turns the gipsy out. Phœbus follows her.

SCENE II

At La Falourdel's. Claude Frollo in a hiding-place at the rear of the stage. Love scene between Phœbus and Esmeralda. Claude stabs Phœbus, who gives a loud cry and falls. Claude leaps out through the window. Esmeralda swoons. La Falourdel and the patrol answer Phœbus' cry. Chorus of the soldiers of the patrol. They charge the gipsy with the crime and carry her off.

SCENE III

Is there any way of reproducing the scene in the dungeon between Claude and Esmeralda? It seems impossible to me, the gipsy not speaking.

SCENE IV

The square in front of Notre-Dame. The crowd pours in from all sides. The archers make a lane through the crowd. Arrival of the condemned girl with her escort. The doors of Notre-Dame are thrown open. The procession of priests comes from the interior of the church, singing psalms. Scene of the *amende honorable* (public apology). *Kyrie eleïson*, in which the people sing the responses. Claude's last appeal to Esmeralda. She spurns him. He turns her over to the executioner. The procession retires. As the executioner is about to bind the gipsy's hands, Quasimodo lets himself down the façade of the church by his rope, and seizes Esmeralda, with whom he rushes through the door, raising her above his head, and shouting: *Sanctuary!* Applause. Chorus of the people. Finale.

ACT THIRD

SCENE I

The Court of Miracles. The vagrants (Claude Frollo among them) taking a vow to release Esmeralda from Notre-Dame. They set out for the church. It is intensely dark.

SCENE II

Assault upon Notre-Dame.

SCENE III

The Place de Grève. Claude arrives, dragging the terror-stricken gipsy. He raises his hood, disclosing his identity, and leads her to the foot of the gallows, saying: "Choose between us two." She chooses the gallows. Distress and wrath of Claude. He delivers her to the recluse. Follows the whole scene as in the novel. As the executioner is about to drag Esmeralda and her mother to the gallows, the scene changes.

SCENE IV

Summit of the towers of Notre-Dame. Day is breaking. Little by little it is possible to distinguish Paris (the old city), which surrounds the church. As the sun rises above the horizon all the bells ring out. Grand chorus of all the chimes of Paris. Claude appears upon the platform. A last strain of despair and satisfied vengeance. He leans over the balustrade on the side toward the Grève. From his excitement it is plain that he is witnessing a fearful sight. Quasimodo appears and silently takes his place behind him. Suddenly, as Claude laughs, he pushes him over into the abyss. Thereupon he leans over the balustrade, looks first at Claude, then at Esmeralda, both dead, and exclaims: "Alas! all that I ever loved!"

Another scheme changes the last act as follows:

SCENE I

The roof above the northern aisle of Notre-Dame. At the left the great northern tower, which loses itself among the flies. At the right, the cell in which Esmeralda has taken refuge. In the background a view of old Paris on the right bank of the Seine. As the curtain rises Quasimodo is heard singing in the tower. Claude and Clopin Trouillefou are upon the stage. Claude listens gloomily to Quasimodo's joyous song. Phœbus is dead. Claude is jealous of Quasimodo now. He is still madly in love with Esmeralda. She must be his! He confides his plan to Clopin Trouillefou. The bishop, at his request, has obtained a decree from the parliament commanding the king's men to tear the gipsy from the sanctuary. The decree is to be executed at night. Claude reckons upon Quasimodo's resisting and refusing to open the church doors to the officers of the law. Taking advantage of the confusion caused by the conflict, he, Claude, will carry off Esmeralda. What will he do with her? Whatever fate ordains. Enter Esmeralda and Quasimodo. Claude has fled. Clopin has followed him. Esmeralda is calm. In default of happiness she is content to be left in peace. All her past life seems a dream. She blesses God, who vouchsafes her the shelter of his church. Quasimodo is uneasy and anxious. He has seen numbers of archers prowling about the church

all day. He induces Esmeralda to return to her cell, while he makes a round of inspection.

SCENE II

The Place de Grève. Reproduction of the Place de Grève as it was in 1482. The stone gibbet in the centre of the square. It is in the shape of a cross. It is dark. Claude enters drawing the terror-stricken Esmeralda after him by the hand. She is pursued by the archers. He discloses his identity to her. She spurns him. He can still save her or give her up. He leads her to the foot of the gallows, and says: "Choose!" She falls at the foot of the cross, and exclaims: "Begone!" Claude turns her over to the archers.

SCENE III

The platform between the towers. This platform is very high. Nothing can be seen save the empty air. Day is beginning to break. Claude appears. It is the hour fixed for Esmeralda's death. He leans over the balustrade. The day breaks, and with the dawn awake one after another all the chimes and all the bells of Paris. Grand concert of bells. Quasimodo appears. He knows that it was Claude who betrayed Esmeralda. His heart is thirsty for vengeance. Claude, in his absorption, does not see him. The fresh young voices of the choir-boys are heard, singing matins in the church. Distant chorus of the people of Paris, awaking. Claude cries aloud. Esmeralda is in the hands

of the executioner. He can see her from his place. She is dead! Quasimodo seizes Claude by the arm, and informs him that now he too must die. Claude struggles and resists, but to no purpose. Quasimodo pushes him into the abyss.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE TO ESMERALDA

Notre-Dame de Paris, the romance which served as a basis for this work, was written by Victor Hugo in 1830–31, and was published in February or March of the latter year. It has been said that the author himself considered it to be in many respects the greatest of his works; it certainly was more instrumental than any other of his earlier productions, not excluding *Hernani*, in popularizing his name.

At the request of M. Bertin, manager of the *Journal des Debats*, and one of his warmest friends, Hugo consented to write the libretto for an opera, based upon his *Notre-Dame*, the music therefor to be composed by M'lle Louise Bertin, the journalist's daughter. He seems to have set about the task toward the close of 1831, and it is fair to presume that the man who habitually employed only two or three weeks in the production of the masterpieces of his genius, did not at the beginning anticipate that it would be more than four years before he would succeed in accomplishing this task to his satisfaction. But such was the fact. "His correspondence with the Bertins from 1832 to 1836," says M. Edmond Biré (*Victor Hugo après 1830*), "shows him to us forever working at this unfortunate *libretto*, replacing it again and again upon its frame, and submitting, with indefatigable patience and perfect good-nature, to the suggestions in the way of remodeling constantly put forward by the author of the music."

Not until November 14, 1836, was the operetta at last performed at the *Opera;* but the leading rôles were then assumed by the most eminent members of the troupe. M'lle Falcon played *Esmeralda;* Adolphe Nourrit, *Phœbus;* Levasseur, *Claude Frollo;* Massol and Taglioni danced in the ballet. It was played entire only six times; but the first act alone with ballet *divertissements* was played nineteen times between March 1837 and October 1839. There was the inevitable contest as to the merits of the work between Hugo's friends and his enemies, the former attributing its comparatively small measure of success to the inadequacy of the setting, the opposition of the newspapers, and the inferior quality of the music, while the latter lauded the music at the expense of the libretto. The criticisms were mainly directed at what was styled "the parodying of the most august solemnities of religion" in the scene upon the Parvis Notre-Dame, and the "scandal" of putting upon the stage an amorous priest. It would certainly seem that there were some good Parisians who were inclined to hold Victor Hugo to a somewhat higher standard of good taste and morality than was exacted from other contemporary authors.

It is doubtless true that those portions of the romance of *Notre-Dame* to which much of its powerful and tragic charm is due, did not lend themselves readily to the demands of a composition of this nature; and the necessary omission of the most impressive scenes and of some of the most striking characters is naturally disappointing. A glance at the author's original outline of the action of the play, taken from the edition definitive, will satisfy the reader that it was only with reluctance that he abandoned the idea of making the play more truly representative of the book,

as it would certainly have been, could it have been made to include the assault of the vagrants upon Notre-Dame, and the scene between Esmeralda and her mother, Paquette la Chantefleurie, the wretched occupant of the cell in the Place de Grève. The absence of Gringoire, in some respects the most original of all the characters in *Notre-Dame*, is to be regretted, as is that of Jehan, the gloomy archdeacon's reckless, dissolute brother; but in no other respect, is the play so weakened by its departure from the book upon which it is based, as in those which the author somewhat apologetically specifies in his preface—the complete revolution in the character of Phœbus de Châteaupers, and the substitution of a most commonplace denouement for the accumulation of tragedy with which the book closes.

MARION DE LORME

PREFACE

This play, which was placed upon the stage eighteen months after the first representation of *Hernani*, was written three months before *Hernani*. Both plays were written in 1829, *Marion de Lorme* in June, *Hernani* in September. With the exception of a few changes in matters of detail, which in no wise modify the fundamental idea of the work, nor the nature of the characters represented, nor the significance of the passions depicted, nor the development of the plot, nor the arrangement of scenes and situations, the author presents his play to the public in this month of August, 1831, just as it was written in the month of June, 1829. There has been no considerable working over, no mutilation, no welding together of parts, no new expenditure of labor, with the exception of the work of adaptation always made necessary by the production of a play. The author has confined himself

to that, that is to say, to the slight trimming of the extreme edges, without which the drama could not be made to fit smoothly into the frame of the stage.

Thus it will be seen that this play was kept off the boards for two years. As to the reasons of its absence between July 1829 and July 1830, they are well known to the public; it was not voluntary, as the author was prevented from producing the play. The censorship pronounced its *veto*, under the successive ministries of Martignac and Polignac, as a formal expression of the will of King Charles X. Perhaps the author will some day narrate this little half-political, half-literary tale. (If he has written the word *censorship* without adding an epithet to it, it is because he fought it so long and so notoriously while it reigned, that he has no right to heap obloquy upon it, now that it lies in the ranks of fallen powers. If ever the attempt is made to resurrect it, we shall see.)

During the second year, from 1830 to 1831, the withholding of *Marion de Lorme* was voluntary. The author held aloof from the stage. And, inasmuch as several persons

whom he has not the honor to know have written to him during this period, to ask if there were any fresh obstacles to the production of this work, the author, while thanking them for their kind interest in so small a matter, feels that he owes them an explanation. It is this:

After the glorious revolution of 1830, the stage having acquired its freedom as a part of the general freedom, those plays which the censorship of the Restoration had buried alive, as Job says, had rushed forth in swarms and with a great uproar upon the stages of the Parisian theatres, whither the public, still gasping with joy and anger, flocked to applaud them. This was as it should be. This delivery of the pigeon-holes of the censorship lasted several weeks, to the great satisfaction of everybody. The *Comèdie-Francaise* remembered *Marion de Lorme*. Some persons high in the councils of that theatre came to the author and urged him to allow his work to be performed, it having been with the others relieved from the interdiction. In that moment of bitter anger against Charles X. the fourth act, which had been prohibited by him, seemed

to them likely to achieve a success due to the political reaction. The author desires to say openly in this place what he then declared privately to the persons who made this overture to him, and notably to the great actress who had shed so great lustre upon the rôle of Donna Sol, that it was precisely that idea, *of the probability of a success due to the political reaction*, which determined him to keep his work in his portfolio for some time to come. He felt that he was in a peculiar position. Although he had been for several years among the most laborious, at least, if not the most illustrious members of the party in opposition, although, ever since he reached man's estate, he had been a devoted adherent of all movements toward progress, amelioration and liberty, and although he had perhaps given some pledges of his devotion, among others, one in connection with this same *Marion de Lorme* just a year before, he remembered, that when he originally entered the field of letters under the impulsion of political passions at sixteen years of age, his first opinions, that is to say, his first illusions, were royalist and Vendean. He remembered that he had written an *Ode du*

Sacre, at a period, it is true, when Charles X., then a popular king, was exclaiming amid universal applause: "No more censorship! No more halberds!" He did not choose to have that past of his flung in his face some day—a past of error, doubtless, but of conscientious convictions and disinterestedness, as he trusts his whole life will be. He realized that a political success, apropos of the fallen Charles X., which another might aspire to, was forbidden him; that it was not fitting that he should be one of the vent-holes for the popular indignation; that, in the excitement of that intoxicating revolution of July, his voice might join with those which applauded the people, but not with those which cursed the king. He did his duty. He did what any man of heart would have done in his place. He refused to authorize the production of the play. Furthermore, he admits that success based upon deliberate scandal, and upon political allusions had little attraction for him. Such success is of little value, and lasts but a short time. It was Louis XIII., whom, with the good faith of an artist devoted to his art, he sought to depict, and not this

or that one of his descendants. And then, too, when the censorship is removed is the time when authors should exercise an honest, conscientious and rigid censorship over their own works. In no other way can they so effectively assert the dignity of their art. When one enjoys full liberty he must use it with the utmost moderation.

To-day, when three hundred and sixty-five days, that is to say, in these times, three hundred and sixty-five epochs, separate us from the dethroned king; when the flood of popular indignation has ceased to beat upon the last decaying years of the Restoration, as the sea flows back from a deserted strand; when Charles X. is more completely forgotten than Louis XIII., the author has presented his play to the public, and the public has accepted it as it is presented, frankly and without *arrière-pensée*, as a work of art, good or bad, and nothing more.

The author congratulates himself and the public that this is so. It is something, it is much, it is everything for literary men, in these days of absorption in politics, that a literary production should be received as such.

To conclude what he has to say, concerning this play, the author will call attention here to the fact that under the elder branch of the Bourbons it would have been absolutely and forever excluded from the stage. Except for the revolution of July it would never have been produced. If it were of greater merit, this observation might well be submitted to those persons who maintain that that revolution was injurious to art. It would be easy to demonstrate that that mighty stroke of enfranchisement and emancipation was not injurious to art but beneficial; that it was not only beneficial, but absolutely essential. It is a fact that, during the last years of the Restoration, the new spirit of the nineteenth century had made itself felt as a reforming, regenerating force in history, poetry, philosophy, in everything, in short, except the drama. There was a very simple explanation of this phenomenon. The censorship built a wall about the stage. There was no means of representing thereon, frankly and truthfully, with the impartiality, but also with the severity of the true artist, a king, a priest, a nobleman, the middle ages, history or the past. The

censorship was at hand, indulgent to scholastic, conventional works, which spread a gloss over everything, and consequently disguise everything; but pitilessly harsh to true, conscientious, sincere art. There were very few exceptions; barely three or four really historical, dramatically constructed works succeeded in slinking upon the stage, in those rare moments when the police, being otherwise engaged, left the door ajar. Thus the censorship held art in check at the door of the theatre. Vidocq barred the way to Corneille. Now, the censorship was an integral part of the Restoration. One could not disappear without the other. Consequently it was necessary that the social revolution should be complete, before the revolution in art could be so considered. The day will come when July 1830 will be deemed a no less important literary than political date.

Art now is free. It must show itself deserving of its freedom.

In conclusion we have this to say. The public—it should be so, and so it is—has never been more judicious, has never been more enlightened and more sober-minded than at

this moment. Revolutions have this in their favor, that they ripen men's minds quickly, in all directions at the same time. In times like ours, the instinct of the masses becomes good taste in two years. Those wretched contentious words, *classic* and *romantic*, fell into the abyss of 1830, as *Gluckist* and *Piccinist*[1] were swallowed up in the raging volcano of 1789. Art alone is left. For the artist who studies the public, and the public must be studied unremittingly, it is a vast encouragement to feel that a more and more profound conception of what befits the age in literature no less than in politics, is day by day being developed among the masses. It is an inspiring spectacle to see the public, harassed by so many diverse interests which make persistent, unremitting demands upon its attention, flock to witness the first transformations of regenerated art, even when they are as incomplete and defective in some directions as the public itself. There is a feeling that it is attentive, sympathetic and overflowing with good will, whether one presents for its consideration, in an historical drama, a lesson from the past, or, in a drama of human

passion, the lesson of all times. Surely, in our opinion at least, there has never been a time so full of promise for the drama. This would be the hour for him, whom God had endowed with the requisite genius, to create a new stage literature, of vast yet simple proportions, one and various, national on its historical side, popular in that it would adhere to what is true, and human, natural and of universal application wherein it depicts human passions. To the task, ye dramatic poets! it is a noble and lofty one. You have to do with a great people accustomed to great things. They have both seen and done many such.

From past ages to the present the interval is immense. The stage can now arouse vast multitudes and move them to their lowest depths. In the old days the people formed a great wall, whereon art could do no more than paint a fresco.

There are those, and among them men of keen intellect, who say that poetry is dead, that art is impossible. But why? Everything is possible at certain moments, and never were more things possible than at this present moment. Certainly anything may be expected

of these new generations, who have so magnificent a future spreading out before them, who are inspired by such lofty thoughts, and sustained by so well-justified a faith in themselves. The author of this drama, who is very proud to belong to them, who is very exultant in that he has sometimes heard his own name upon their lips, although he is the least among them,—the author of this drama hopes for everything from his youthful contemporaries, even for a great poet. May this still hidden genius, if he exists, not allow himself to be disheartened by those who exclaim that the times are unproductive and prosaic. An age too far advanced? No original genius? Let them talk on, my young friend. If anyone had said at the end of the eighteenth century, after the Regent, after Voltaire, after Beaumarchais, after Louis XV., after Cagliostro, after Marat, that the Charlemagnes, the grand, poetic, almost legendary Charlemagnes, might still be seen upon earth, all the skeptics of the day, that is to say, society as a whole, would have shrugged their shoulders and laughed at the idea. And yet at the beginning of this nineteenth century we have had the empire

and the emperor. Why should there not now arise a poet who should be to Shakespeare what Napoleon was to Charlemagne?

AUGUST, 1831.

NOTE

[1] The *Gluckists* were partisans of Gluck, the famous composer of the eighteenth century, as opposed to *Piccinists*, the partisans of his rival Piccini. The Gluckists preferred music which sacrificed melody to dramatic expression, while the Piccinists preferred melodious, tuneful music to that which aspired to be dramatic.—LITTRÉ.

REPRODUCTION OF MARION DE LORME

AT THE THEATRE-FRANCAIS, 1873

The appearance of *Marion de Lorme* upon the stage dates back to 1831. Forty-two years separate the first performance from the present reproduction. The author was young, he is old; he was present, he is absent; he then had hope before him, he now has life behind him.

His absence at this reappearance of his work may seem voluntary, but it is not. Those men to whom their gray hairs are a constant warning, and whose time is growing short, have tasks to finish, testaments of the mind, so to speak. They may be suddenly interrupted by the coming of the end, and they have not a day to lose; hence arises the stern necessity of retirement and solitude. Man has duties to fulfill toward his thoughts. Moreover,

every departure requires more or less preparation, a journey to an unknown country awaits us all, and solitude and retirement are a sort of twilight which prepares the soul for the dense darkness and the brilliant light.

The author feels the need of explaining his absence to those who are generous enough to remember him. Nothing would sadden him more than to be considered ungrateful. All alone as he is, from the bottom of his heart he associates himself in spirit with the vast audience which pays its tribute of affection and respect to those talented artists, who confer honor upon the present revival of *Marion de Lorme*, MM. Got, Delaunay, Maubant, Bressant and Febvre, a brilliant group, fittingly completed by the youthful renown of M. Mounet-Sully. He sends all his admiring sympathy to the glorious Théâtre-Français, rejuvenated in its old age, thanks to the skillful and intelligent management of M. Émile Perrin; and he performs a welcome duty by offering his threefold gratitude to Mademoiselle Favart, who enacted *Donna Sol* with so much power and grace, before enacting *Marion*, and who, two years ago, by her courage and her

loveliness in the sublime gloom of Paris besieged, caused every tongue to repeat again and again that word, which is her name: *Stella.*

V. H.

HAUTEVILLE-HOUSE,
FEBRUARY 1, 1873.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MARION DE LORME
DIDIER
LOUIS XIII
MARQUIS DE SAVERNY
MARQUIS DE NANGIS
L'ANGELY
M. DE LAFFEMAS
M. DE BELLEGARDE

Officers of the Anjou Regiment.

MARQUIS DE BRICHANTEAU
COMTE DE GASSÉ
VICOMTE DE BOUCHAVANNES
CHEVALIER DE ROCHEBARON
COMTE DE VILLAC
CHEVALIER DE MONTPESAT

ABBE DE GONDI
COMTE DE CHARNACE

Provincial Actors

LE SCARAMOUCHE
LE GRACIEUX
LE TAILLEBRAS

A COUNCILOR OF THE GRAND CHAMBER
THE PUBLIC CRIER
A DISTRICT CAPTAIN OF THE CITY OF BLOIS
A JAILER
A CLERK
THE EXECUTIONER
FIRST WORKMAN
SECOND WORKMAN
THIRD WORKMAN
A VALET
DAME ROSE

Provincial Actors, Guards, Populace, Gentlemen, Pages.

Time—1638.

ACT FIRST

THE RENDEZVOUS

BLOIS

A bed-room.—At the back of the stage an open window looking upon a balcony. At the right, a table with a lamp, and an armchair. At the left, a door with a tapestry portière. A bed in the shadow.

SCENE I

MARION DE LORME, in a negligé costume of great elegance, seated by the table, with an embroidery frame in her hand: MARQUIS DE SAVERNY, a fair-haired, beardless youth, dressed in the height of the fashion, as it was in 1638.

SAVERNY (approaching Marion and trying to kiss her).

Let us cry quits, my little Marie!

MARION (pushing him away).

We can cry quits as well if we 're not quite so near together.

SAVERNY (persisting).

One kiss!

MARION (angrily).

Monsieur le Marquis!

SAVERNY.

What a fierce frown! Your lips used sometimes to have kinder whims than this.

MARION.

But you forget . . .

SAVERNY.

No, my love, I remember.

MARION (aside).

How he persists! provoking creature!

SAVERNY.

Pray tell me, mademoiselle, what we must think of the brusque way in which you turned your back on Paris? and why it is, that while your friends are searching for you on the Place Royale, I find you here at Blois in hiding?—Ah! traitress! what have you been doing here these two months past?

MARION.

I do just what I choose, and choose to do just what I ought, for I am free, monsieur.

SAVERNY.

Free! and are they free, madame, whose hearts are in your keeping? Myself for one, and Gondi, who passed half the time of mass with us the other day, having a duel on his hands on your account; Nesmond, Pressigny, D'Arquien, the two Caussades; all are so sullen and disconsolate at your departure, that e'en their wives would join with them to welcome your return, to make their husbands something more endurable.

MARION (smiling).

And Beauvilain?

SAVERNY.

He loves you still.

MARION.

Céreste?

SAVERNY.

Adores you.

MARION.

Pons?

SAVERNY.

Ah! he detests you.

MARION.

He is the only veritable lover. And the old president?

(Laughing.)

His name?

(Laughing more heartily.)

Leloup!

SAVERNY.

Why, pending your return, he has your portrait, and pours out his adulation at that shrine.

MARION.

Yes, for two years, he has worshiped me in effigy.

SAVERNY.

How much he would prefer to burn you! But, in good sooth, how can you fly from such a host of friends?

MARION (seriously, and lowering her eyes).

Marquis, to speak you frankly, these same friends are the essential causes of my flight. The garish sins, which, in my younger days, did charm my wits away, have left within my heart regret, and nothing more. It is my purpose now to expiate my dissolute and impure life in strict retirement, it may be in a convent.

SAVERNY.

I 'll wager that there is some love affair beneath all this.

MARION.

Then you believe . . .

SAVERNY.

That one should never see a veil where black eyes flash beneath their silky lashes. It cannot be.—Go to! you have a lover in the country! how tame a close to such a thrilling romance!

MARION.

'T is false.

SAVERNY.

I 'll stake my life upon it.

MARION.

What 's the hour, Rose?

DAME ROSE (outside).

'T will soon be midnight.

MARION (aside).

Midnight!

SAVERNY.

It is a cunning way to say, Begone!

MARION.

I live in very close retirement, receiving no one, and unknown to all. And then, at this late hour some mishap may befall you. 'T is a deserted street, and overrun with robbers.

SAVERNY.

So be it. Let them rob me.

MARION.

Sometimes there 's murder done.

SAVERNY.

Then let them murder me.

MARION.

But . . .

SAVERNY.

You are divine! Before I take my leave, I mean to know from you who is the lucky rustic who succeeds us all.

MARION.

No one at all.

SAVERNY.

I 'll keep your secret. We courtiers are supposed to be light-headed creatures, indiscreet, inquisitive, ill-humored marplots; but

we 're always prattling, never really talk. Will you say nothing?

(He sits down.)

Then I stay.

MARION.

Well, yes! what matters it? I am in love. I am awaiting some one!

SAVERNY.

Good! that 's the way to talk! Where do you meet him?

MARION.

Here.

SAVERNY.

And when?

MARION.

An instant hence.

(She goes to the balcony and listens.)

Perchance he 's coming now.

(Returning.)

No.

(To Saverny.)

And now you are content.

SAVERNY.

Not altogether.

MARION.

Go, in pity's name!

SAVERNY.

I will; but tell me first the gallant's name who turns me out, and for whose sake I thus am shown the door.

MARION.

I know him by no other name than Didier. He knows me by no other name than Marie.

SAVERNY (laughing heartily).

'Pon honor?

MARION.

Yes, 'pon honor.

SAVERNY.

Pasquedieu! this savors strongly of the sheepfold! 't is Racan pure and simple. Prithee, will he scale the wall to make his way to you?

MARION.

Mayhap he will. Now go, and quickly.

(Aside.)

He wears my life out!

SAVERNY (becoming serious once more).

But do you know if he 's of gentle birth?

MARION.

I have no knowledge.

SAVERNY.

What!

(As Marion pushes him gently toward the door.)

I go . . .

(He returns.)

A single word. I had forgotten. An author, who is not provoked with you, has writ this book for you.

(He takes a book from his pocket, and hands it to Marion.)

'T is making a great noise.

MARION (reading the title).

Love's Garland.

To Marion de Lorme.

SAVERNY.

Love's Garland is on everybody's tongue in Paris; it and *Le Cid* have been the great successes of the day.

MARION (taking the book).

'T is most gallant. Good-night.

SAVERNY.

Where is the use of winning fame? To come to Blois to bill and coo with a mere clodhopper!

MARION (calling Dame Rose).

Look to the marquis, Rose, and show him out.

SAVERNY (saluting).

Oh! Marion! Marion! you are sadly fallen!

(Exit.)

SCENE II

MARION, afterward DIDIER.

MARION (alone).

(She secures the door through which Saverny left the stage.)

Go, go, in God's name! How I did tremble in my shoes lest Didier . . .

(A clock strikes.)

'T is midnight.

(After counting the strokes.)

Midnight. He should be here ere this.

(She goes to the balcony and looks down into the street.)

No one in sight!

(She returns to her seat with some show of ill-humor.)

To think he should be late! Already!

(A young man appears behind the railing of the balcony, clambers quickly over it, enters the room, and places his cloak and sword upon a chair. He is dressed in the costume of the period, entirely in black, and with half boots. He steps forward, stops, and gazes for some seconds at Marion, as she sits looking down at the floor.)

MARION.

Aha!

(Reproachfully.)

To make me count the hours, while I wait for you!

DIDIER (gravely).

I hesitated to come up to you.

MARION (offended).

Indeed, monsieur!

DIDIER (without noticing her tone).

Standing a moment since, beneath your balcony, I felt my very entrails stirred to pity, yes, pity, and for you. Before I took this step, accursed and baleful creature that I am, I said: "There sits in yonder chamber, in her virtue and the first bloom of her youthful loveliness, as yet unspotted by the world, an angel fair, a pure and gentle soul, to whom the passers-by should kneel with claspéd hands. And what am I, alas! who crawl amid the crowd? Why should I agitate this stream that flows so placidly? Why pluck this lily? Why sully with an impure breath the limpid surface of this tranquil soul? Since, in her purity, she trusts without reserve to my fidelity,

she whom her innocence makes sacred in my sight, have I the right to take the love she offers me, and mingle with the sunlight of her life the shadows and the gloom of mine?

MARION (aside).

'Faith, this is very like a sermon! Can he be a Huguenot?

DIDIER.

But the soft witchery of your sweet voice came floating to me on the wings of night, resolved my doubts, and brought me to your side.

MARION.

What 's that? You heard my voice? How strange!

DIDIER.

Another voice also.

MARION (hastily).

Dame Rose's. One would almost say hers was a man's voice, her tone 's so loud and deep. But since you 've come at last, I hold no further grudge against you. Sit you down, I beg.

(Pointing to a seat beside her.)

Here.

DIDIER.

No. At your feet.

(He sits down upon a stool at Marion's feet, and gazes into her face for some moments without speaking.)

Pray listen, Marie. I have no name but Didier. I never knew my father or my mother. I was left, a child, upon a church stoop, naked. An aged woman of the common people, having some pity in her heart, took charge of me, was nurse to me as well as mother, reared me in Christian principles, and when she died bequeathed me all her property, an income of nine hundred livres, by which I live to-day. Alone at twenty years, my life was sad and comfortless. I traveled much, I saw mankind; some men I grew to hate, the rest to hold in scorn; for nothing could I see but pride and misery and pain upon that sullied mirror which is called the human face. And so you see me now, still young, yet old in heart, and weary of the world as most men are on leaving it; nothing I touch that does not turn and rend me, and though the world is evil in my sight, man is far worse. Now, I was living thus, in poverty and gloom and loneliness, when you appeared and

brought sweet comfort to my heart. I knew you not. You first appeared to me in all your loveliness, one evening at the corner of a street in Paris, and after that I met you now and then; your eyes seemed always soft to me, and your speech soft and low. I feared to love you, and I fled. Strange chance! I meet you here, yes everywhere, like my good angel. At last, spurred on by love, yet wavering and irresolute, I dared to speak to you, and you replied. And now my heart, my life are at your service. Do you desire aught that lies within my power to secure? What man, what thing is troublesome to you? Is your heart fixed on aught, and do you need some one to die for it? to die without a word, and deem that all his blood is doubly paid for with a smile? Do you need such an one? Speak, order, I am here.

MARION (smiling).

You are a strange man, but I love you so.

DIDIER.

You love me! Have a care. Such words, alas! should not be said in sport. You love me? Do you know what this love is? A love

which doth become our blood, our life, which, after smouldering many days, bursts forth in flame that rises ever higher, and burns the worthless debris of the other passions where we have heaped them up in the recesses of the heart! A love that knows no bounds, and knows no hope, but still lives on, profound and cheerless, after happiness has fled? Tell me, is such the love whereof you speak?

MARION (deeply moved).

In very truth . . .

DIDIER.

Ah me! you do not know how ardently I love you! From the first day we met my cheerless life took on a golden tinge, your glances lighted me amid the darkness. From that time all was changed. To my eyes you are as a being from another world, one sent from heaven. This life, wherein my heart has long rebelliously bewailed its fate, appears now in a light which makes it almost beautiful: for hitherto, alas! alone, down-trodden, and a wanderer, I 've struggled and I 've suffered. I had never loved!

MARION.

Poor Didier!

DIDIER.

Marie! . . .

MARION.

Yes, I do love you. Yes, I love you! As much as you yourself love me. It may be more—who knows?—'T is I who follow you where'er you go, and I am yours.

DIDIER (kneeling).

Deceive me not! To my great love and pure let yours make answer, and my happiness might be the dowry of a world; and my whole life, here prostrate at your feet, will be all love and ecstasy and joy. Oh! if you should deceive me!

MARION.

What can I do that will convince you of my love?

DIDIER.

Give me a proof of it.

MARION.

What proof? Say on.

DIDIER.

You 're free, of course?

MARION (with some embarrassment).

Yes . . .

DIDIER.

Take me for your staff, your brother; marry me!

MARION (aside).

Why am I so unworthy of him?

DIDIER.

Well?

MARION.

Why . . .

DIDIER.

I understand. An orphan, penniless, such insolence is strange, unprecedented, and I weary you. So leave me to my sorrow and my misery and loneliness. Farewell.

(He steps toward the window. Marion detains him.)

MARION.

Didier! Didier! what 's that you say?

(She bursts into tears.)

DIDIER (returning).

Forgive me! But why hesitate?

(Approaching her.)

Dost thou grasp what it means, my Marie? To be each to the other in this world, both

fatherland and heaven! To live unknown, wherever thou mayst choose, and there conceal such happiness as might make crowned kings envious!

MARION.

Ah! 't would be heaven indeed!

DIDIER.

And wilt thou take it?

MARION (aside).

Wretched woman!

(Aloud.)

I cannot. Never!

(She tears herself from Didier's arms and falls back upon her chair.)

DIDIER (very coldly).

The offer on my part was most ungenerous. Enough. I 'll speak of it no more.

MARION (aside).

Oh! cursed be the day I won his love!

(Aloud.)

I 'll tell you, Didier . . . You break my heart . . . I will explain . . .

DIDIER (coldly).

What were you reading, madame, when I came?

(He takes the book from the table and reads.)

Love's Garland. To Marion de Lorme.

(Bitterly.)

Oh! yes, the famous beauty of the hour!

(Dashing the book violently on the floor.)

Ah! the vile creature, shameless among women!

MARION (trembling).

Monsieur

DIDIER.

What do you with these noisome books? How come they here?

MARION (feebly, and hanging her head).

'T was chance . .

DIDIER.

Do you, with your pure eye and guileless brow, know who is Marion de Lorme? A woman, beautiful to look upon, but all awry within! A Phryne, who to all men at all places sells her execrable, shameful love!

MARION (hiding her face in her hands).

Great God!

(Footsteps are heard without, together with the clash of swords and shouts.)

VOICE IN THE STREET.

Murder!

DIDIER.

What is this noise out yonder in the square?

(The shouts continue.)

VOICE IN THE STREET.

Help! Murder!

DIDIER (going to the balcony).

Some one is being murdered.

(He takes his sword, and puts his leg over the railing. Marion rises, runs to him, and tries to hold him back by his cloak.)

MARION.

Didier! if you love me . . . They 'll kill you! Stay!

DIDIER (leaping down into the street).

But meanwhile they 'll kill him, poor man!

(Outside, to the combatants.)

Stop! Stand firm, monsieur.

(Clash of swords.)

Have at him now! Take that, you villain!

(Clash of swords, sound of voices and of scuffling footsteps.)

MARION (on the balcony, in deadly terror).

Great Heaven! Six against two!

VOICE IN THE STREET.

Why, this man is the very devil!

(The clashing of swords gradually grows less, and finally ceases altogether. Footsteps growing fainter. Didier reappears, climbing over the balcony.)

DIDIER (still outside the railing, and looking down into the street).

You are well out of the affair. So go your way.

SAVERNY (outside).

I will not go until I 've pressed your hand, and thanked you, if it 's all the same to you.

DIDIER (angrily).

Go your way! I will remit the thanks, monsieur.

SAVERNY.

But I will thank you!

(He climbs the balcony.)

DIDIER.

Zounds! could you not have called out: "Thanks!" from down below, and not have climbed up here?

SCENE III

MARION, DIDIER, SAVERNY.

SAVERNY.

(Jumping down into the room, sword in hand.)

Pardon! this is rank tyranny, to save my life and then to shut your door upon me! Your door, that is to say, your window. But no, it never shall be said that one who bore my name was bravely rescued by a gallant gentleman without so much as saying to him: "Marquis ——" Your name, monsieur?

DIDIER.

Is Didier.

SAVERNY.

Didier de what?

DIDIER.

Didier de nothing. Look you: some one sets upon you, and I lend a hand. 'T is done, so go your way.

SAVERNY.

What charming manners! Why not let those villains murder me beneath your

windows? That would have been far better. For, but for you, i' faith, I was a dead man. Six highwaymen against me! Six stout daggers 'gainst my slender blade!

(He spies Marion, who has been trying to keep out of his sight.)

Ah! but I see, you were most charmingly employed. I interrupt a tender interview. I pray your pardon.

(Aside.)

I 'll have a glance, however, at the lady.

(He walks toward the trembling Marion, and recognizes her.)

(In an undertone.)

What! you!

(Pointing to Didier.)

Then this is he?

MARION (in an undertone).

Ah! Monsieur, you 'll undo me!

SAVERNY (bowing).

Madame . . .

MARION (in an undertone).

This is the first time I have really loved.

DIDIER (aside).

Upon my soul, this fellow stares at her most saucily!

(He overturns the lamp with a blow of his fist.)

SAVERNY.

How now? Pray why did you put out the lamp?

DIDIER.

By your leave, we will go hence in company.

SAVERNY.

So be it. I am with you.

(He bows low to Marion.)

Adieu, madame.

DIDIER (aside).

What does this fop resemble?

(To Saverny.)

Come!

SAVERNY.

You 're most unmannerly, but still I owe my life to you, and should you ever stand in need of a devoted heart, of zealous, brotherly affection,—Marquis de Saverny, Hotel de Nesle, Paris.

DIDIER.

'T is well.

(Aside.)

How my blood boils to see her stared at by a wretched coxcomb!

(They go off by way of the balcony. Didier's voice is heard in the street.)

Your road lies that way and mine this.

SCENE IV

MARION, DAME ROSE.

(Marion stands for a moment lost in thought, then calls.)

MARION.

Dame Rose!

(Dame Rose appears. Marion points to the window.)

Pray close the window.

DAME ROSE.

(Having closed the window, she turns and sees Marion wiping away a tear.—Aside.)

I do believe she 's weeping.

(Aloud.)

'T is time for sleep, madame.

MARION.

Yes, 't is your bed-time.

(Taking down her hair.)

Come and undress me.

DAME ROSE (undressing her).

Well, madame, is the gentleman agreeable? and rich?

MARION.

Oh, no!

DAME ROSE.

Nor amorous?

MARION.

No.

DAME ROSE.

Then what have you to do with him?

MARION (pensively).

I love him.

ACT SECOND

THE MEETING

BLOIS

The door of a wine-shop. A public square. In the background is the city of Blois, built in the shape of an amphitheatre; the towers of Saint Nicholas stand out amid the thickly clustered houses on the hill-side.

SCENE I

COMTE DE GASSÉ, MARQUIS DE BRICHANTEAU, VICOMTE DE BOUCHAVANNES, CHEVALIER DE ROCHEBARON. They are sitting at tables before the door, some smoking, others throwing dice and drinking. Afterwards CHEVALIER DE MONTPESAT, and COMTE DE VILLAC:—then L'ANGELY; then the PUBLIC CRIER and the POPULACE.

BRICHANTEAU (rising, as Gassé enters).

Gassé!

(They shake hands.)

Art come to Blois to join the regiment?

(Saluting him.)

We do felicitate thee on thy burial.

(Scrutinizing his costume.)

Aha!

GASSÉ.

That is the fashion. Orange, with blue favors.

(Folding his arms and twirling his moustache.)

D' ye know that Blois is forty leagues from Paris?

BRICHANTEAU.

It might as well be China!

GASSÉ.

And that 's what makes the women weep! To follow us they must expatriate themselves.

BOUCHAVANNES (looking up from the game).

Is monsieur just from Paris?

ROCHEBARON (laying down his pipe).

Is there any news?

GASSÉ (saluting them).

No, none at all. Corneille is still the rage. Guiche has the order. Ast is made duke. Then there are nothings to one's heart's content. They 've hanged a score or more of Huguenots. The crop of duels is still plentiful. D'Angennes fought Arquien upon the third for wearing *point de Gênes*. Lavardie had a meeting on the tenth with Pons, because he 'd taken

Sourdis' wife away from Pons; and Sourdis with D'Ailly, about some nymph from the Mondori theatre; the ninth, Lachâtre with Nogent, for having written ill three lines of Colletet; and Magaillan with Gorde because they disagreed about the time of day; and D'Humière with Gondi for the *pas* at church. Then all the Brissacs fought with all the Soubises anent a wager on a horse against a dog. Lastly, Caussade fought Latournelle, for nothing, or for fun. Caussade killed Latournelle.

BRICHANTEAU.

Oh! happy Paris! the duels have begun again in earnest!

GASSÉ.

They 're the fashion now.

BRICHANTEAU.

Feasting and love and fighting all the time. One can enjoy one's self and live nowhere but there.

(Yawning.)

But here a fellow 's bored beyond description!

(To Gassé.)

Caussade killed Latournelle, thou sayest?

GASSÉ.

Yes, with an honest cut and thrust.

(Examining Rochebaron's sleeves.)

What have you there, dear boy? Consider that all this is long since out of style. Buttons and shoulder-knots! 'pon honor, nothing could be more depressing. Knots and ribbons!

BRICHANTEAU.

Prithee, run through once more the list of duels. What says the king to them?

GASSÉ.

The cardinal is furious, and wishes to apply a speedy remedy.

BOUCHAVANNES.

Is there no courier from the camp?

GASSÉ.

I think that we have taken Figuera by surprise, or else they 've taken it from us.

(Reflecting.)

Yes, they have taken it from us.

ROCHEBARON.

What says the king to that?

GASSÉ.

The cardinal is not at all content.

BRICHANTEAU.

What 's going on at court? The king is well, I trust?

GASSÉ.

Not so. The cardinal has fever and the gout, and travels only in a litter.

BRICHANTEAU.

Strange man! When we say king to thee thou answerest cardinal.

GASSÉ.

Oh! that 's the fashion.

BOUCHAVANNES.

So there 's nothing new?

GASSÉ.

What do I say? No news? Why there 's a miracle, a prodigy, which has kept Paris at the boiling point for two whole months! The flight, the disappearance of . . .

BRICHANTEAU.

Of whom?

GASSÉ.

Of Marion de Lorme, the queen of beauty.

BRICHANTEAU (mysteriously).

Do thou, too, listen to a bit of news. She 's here!

GASSÉ.

God save the mark! at Blois?

BRICHANTEAU.

Incognito.

GASSÉ (shrugging his shoulders).

Marion here! You jest, Monsieur de Brichanteau! She here! What! Marion, who sets the fashion! Why, Blois is the antipodes of Paris! Look; . . . everything is ugly, old and dirty.

(Pointing to the towers of Saint Nicholas.)

Why e'en yon steeples have an awkward and provincial air.

ROCHEBARON.

'T is true.

BRICHANTEAU.

But if I tell you Saverny has seen her here in hiding, already furnished with a lusty lover? who saved Saverny, if you please, from

certain thieves who had him by the collar! from down-right highwaymen, whose purpose was to profit by their meeting to give alms from his purse, and tell the hour by his watch.

GASSÉ.

Why, 't is a veritable romance!

ROCHEBARON (to Brichanteau).

Are you quite sure of it?

BRICHANTEAU.

As I am sure of my six silver bezants on an azure field! Indeed, Saverny's sole desire since that night has been to find the man to whom he owes his life.

BOUCHAVANNES.

But why does he not go and look for him with her?

BRICHANTEAU.

She has since changed her lodgings and her name. He has lost trace of her.

(Marion and Didier walk slowly across at the rear of the stage, unseen by the officers, and enter one of the houses at the side through a small door.)

GASSÉ.

To think that I must come to Blois to stumble upon Marion!

(Enter MM. de Villac and de Montpesat, talking very loud and quarreling.)

VILLAC.

I tell thee no!

MONTPESAT.

I tell thee yes!

VILLAC.

Corneille is wretched stuff!

MONTPESAT.

To treat Corneille thus scornfully! Corneille, the author of *Le Cid* and of *Mélite!*

VILLAC.

Mélite is very well; I must agree that it has merit; but since that Corneille has done naught but deteriorate, as they all do. I do all that I can to humor thee. Talk of *Mélite* and of *La Galerie du Palais*, if you will; but what 's *Le Cid*, I pray to know?

GASSÉ (to Montpesat).

Monsieur is very moderate!

MONTPESAT.

Le Cid is fine.

VILLAC.

'T is villanous! Why, Scudéry annihilates thy *Cid* by simply touching it! What style! 't is nothing but a jumble of strange phrases, and of low and vulgar forms of speech. He calls things by their names on all occasions. *Le Cid* is obscene, too, and violates the canons of good taste. The *Cid* has not the right to wed his love. But hast thou read *Pyrame* and *Bradamante?* When Corneille writes such plays as those, give me Corneille!

ROCHEBARON (to Montpesat).

Read also Monsieur Mairet's *Grand et Dernier Soliman.* That 's the great tragedy. But *Le Cid!*

VILLAC.

And then he is so vain and impudent! He thinks to rival Boisrobert, Mairet, Chapelain, Serisay, Gombault, Habert, Giry, Bautru, Faret, Desmarets, Malleville, Duryer, Colletet, Cherisy, Gomberville, the whole academy, in short!

BRICHANTEAU (laughing pityingly, and shrugging his shoulders).

Oh! Excellent!

VILLAC.

And my fine gentleman assumes to be original! and to create! The upstart! To create, after Garnier! after Theophilus! and after Hardy! The clown! Create! a simple thing, indeed! As if those mighty minds left anything behind them uncreated! Chapelain twits him prettily thereon.

ROCHEBARON.

Corneille 's a vulgar fellow!

BOUCHAVANNES.

But His Reverence of Grassé, Monsieur Godeau, tells me he 's very clever.

MONTPESAT.

Very!

VILLAC.

If he wrote otherwise than he does write, if he would follow Aristotle and his principles . . .

GASSÉ.

Truce to your quarreling, messieurs. Corneille is à la mode. He has succeeded

Garnier, just as the broad felt hats succeed the velvet mortiers.

MONTPESAT.

For my part, I am for Corneille and the felt hats.

GASSÉ (to Montpesat).

Thou dost go too far!

(To Villac.)

Garnier's very fine, but—I am quite unprejudiced—Corneille has his fine passages at times.

VILLAC.

Agreed.

ROCHEBARON.

Agreed. He is a clever feſlow, I esteem him highly.

BRICHANTEAU.

But this Corneille's nobility is of the briefest!

ROCHEBARON.

The name has a most sickening savor of the bourgeoisie.

BOUCHAVANNES.

A family of pettifogging lawyers, who 've made sous for themselves by gnawing ducats.

(Enters L'Angely, who takes a seat at a table by himself without speaking. He is dressed in black velvet, trimmed with gold lace.

VILLAC.

Messieurs, if the public relishes his rhapsodies, 't is all up with the noble art of tragi-comedy! The stage is ruined, on my word of honor! For Richelieu . . .

GASSÉ (looking askance at L'Angely).

For God's sake, say monseigneur, or speak not so loud!

BRICHANTEAU.

The devil take his Eminence! In God's name, is it not enough for him to have the army and the purse-strings in his hands, and everything to do with as he will, but must he hang a weight upon our tongues?

BOUCHAVANNES.

Death to this Richelieu who rends the hand he fawns upon! he with the bloodstained hand and scarlet robe!

ROCHEBARON.

Prithee, of what use is the king?

BRICHANTEAU.

The people march in darkness, eyes fixed on a gleaming torch. The torch is Richelieu.

The king 's the lantern which doth screen him from the wind behind its somewhat grimy glass.

BOUCHAVANNES.

Oh! could we but blow out the torch some day, with a keen blast from our good swords! a great day that would be!

ROCHEBARON.

If everyone but shared my sentiments in his regard!

BRICHANTEAU.

We would foregather, and . . .

(To Bouchavannes.),

What sayest thou, viscount?

BOUCHAVANNES.

We would give him a good *coup de Jarnac!*[1]

L'ANGELY (rising and speaking in a solemn voice).

A plot! My young friends, think of Marillac!

(They all start, turn about, and in their consternation cease their conversation, gazing at L'Angely, who resumes his seat in silence.)

VILLAC (taking Montpesat aside).

A moment since, chevalier, thou didst speak to me, apropos of Corneille, in tones

which grated on my ear. I would be glad to say two words to thee in my turn, an' it please thee.

MONTPESAT.

With thy sword?

VILLAC.

Even so.

MONTPESAT.

Wouldst thou prefer the pistol?

VILLAC.

Both.

MONTPESAT (taking his arm).

Let us seek some retired spot.

L'ANGELY (rising).

A duel! Remember Sieur de Bouteville!

(Renewed alarm among the officers. Villac and Montpesat separate, staring at L'Angely.)

ROCHEBARON.

Who is this man in black? Upon my word he makes me shudder.

L'ANGELY.

My name is L'Angely. I am the king's fool.

BRICHANTEAU (laughing).

I can no longer wonder that the king 's melancholy.

BOUCHAVANNES (laughing).

A foolish cardinalist makes a charming fool!

L'ANGELY (standing up).

Beware, messieurs. The minister is powerful; he mows with a free hand, and sheds men's blood in rivers; then throws his red gown over everything, and all is said.

(A pause.)

GASSÉ.

Mordieu!

ROCHEBARON.

Deuce take me if I budge!

BRICHANTEAU.

'Faith, Plato was hilarious beside this jester.

(Enter a multitude of people from the neighboring streets and houses, and fill the square. In the midst of the crowd the public crier on horseback, with four city officials in livery, one of them blowing a trumpet, and another beating a drum.)

GASSÉ.

What is the meaning of this flood of people? . . . Aha! the crier! What will he sing to us, by way of *Pater Noster?*

BRICHANTEAU (to a juggler among the crowd, with a monkey on his back).

My friend, which of you is exhibiting the other?

MONTPESAT (to Rochebaron).

See if our packs of cards are full.

(Pointing to the four servants in livery).

I 'll lay a ducat that yon knaves were filched from one of them.

THE PUBLIC CRIER (with a nasal twang).

Silence, good citizens!

BRICHANTEAU (aside, to Gassé).

He has a savage look, and his voice seems to make more use of nose than mouth.

THE CRIER.

"Royal ordinance . . . Louis, by grace of God . . . "

BOUCHAVANNES (aside to Brichanteau).

A *fleur de lysé* cloak to cover Richelieu!

L'ANGELY.

Give heed, messieurs!

THE CRIER (continuing).

"King of France and of Navarre."

BRICHANTEAU (aside to Bouchavannes).

A sounding name, of which no minister is ever covetous.

THE CRIER (continuing).

"To all who see these presents, greeting!

(He bows.)

"Having considered that all kings should aim to stamp out dueling by rigorous penalties; and that despite the edicts of our royal ancestors, duels are far more numerous to-day than ever; we do decree and order, that henceforth all duelists (those culprits who deprive us of our subjects), whether the two survive, or one alone, be brought to court for punishment, and forthwith hanged, nobles and commoners alike. And to give greater efficacy to this edict, we do renounce our right of pardon for this crime. Such is our pleasure. "Signed: LOUIS. And below, RICHELIEU."

(Indignation among the officers.)

BRICHANTEAU.

We, hanged like Barabbas!

BOUCHAVANNES.

Hang us! Pray tell me what the place is called where one can find a rope to hang a gentleman withal!

THE CRIER (continuing).

We, provost of the city, do give order that the decree be posted on the square, that all may read it.

(Two of the officials affix a great placard to an iron gallows, which projects from a wall at the right.)

GASSÉ.

A la bonne heure! the edict is the thing that must be hanged.

BOUCHAVANNES (shaking his head).

Yes, count! pending his turn who caused its promulgation!

(Exit the crier. The people disperse. Enters Saverny. It is beginning to grow dark.)

SCENE II

THE SAME: MARQUIS DE SAVERNY.

BRICHANTEAU (going up to Saverny).

Ah! cousin Saverny! hast found the man who saved thee from the thieves the other night?

SAVERNY.

No. I have sought him everywhere, and made inquiries in vain throughout the city. The thieves, the youth, and Marion de Lorme have vanished all like people in a dream.

BRICHANTEAU.

But surely thou didst see him when he took thee in, even as a Christian rescued from the hands of unbelievers?

SAVERNY.

He overturned the candle first of all.

GASSÉ.

'T is very strange.

BRICHANTEAU.

But wouldst thou know him, if thou shouldst fall in with him?

SAVERNY.

No, for I did not see his face.

BRICHANTEAU.

Dost know his name?

SAVERNY.

Didier.

ROCHEBARON.

That 's not the name of any gentleman; 't is a bourgeois name.

SAVERNY.

But Didier 's his name. Full many men, who boast of noble birth and play the conqueror, have greater names than he, but none have greater hearts. I had six robbers, and he, Marion de Lorme; he left her side, and saved my life. 'T is an enormous debt I owe him! and I 'll pay it with my blood, I swear before you all!

VILLAC.

How long since, marquis, have you paid your debts?

SAVERNY (proudly).

I 've always paid those which are paid with blood. My blood is all my wealth.

(It has become quite dark. Lights appear in the windows one after another. A lamp-lighter enters, lights a lamp above the placard, and exit. The small door through which Marion and Didier entered one of the houses, opens again. Didier comes out in deep thought, walking slowly, with his arms folded beneath his cloak.)

SCENE III

THE SAME: DIDIER.

DIDIER.

(Coming slowly forward from the back of the stage, without being seen or heard by the others.)

Marquis de Saverny! I would like much to see the fop who was so brazen-faced with her the other evening. His shameless air sits heavy on my heart.

BOUCHAVANNES (to Saverny, who is talking with Brichanteau).

Saverny!

DIDIER (aside).

Ah! that 's my man!

(He comes slowly forward with his eyes fixed upon the officers, and sits down at a table under the lamp which lights the placard, a few steps from L'Angely, who remains silent in his seat.)

BOUCHAVANNES (as Saverny turns).

Dost know of the decree?

SAVERNY.

What 's that?

BOUCHAVANNES.

It orders us to forswear dueling.

SAVERNY.

Why, that is very wise.

BRICHANTEAU.

Yes, yes, but under pain of being hanged!

SAVERNY.

Oh! thou art jesting! Never. It 's very well to hang the common people.

BRICHANTEAU (pointing to the placard).

Read it thyself. It 's posted on the wall.

SAVERNY (noticing Didier).

Yon sallow-face may read it to me.

(To Didier, raising his voice.)

Holà! you fellow in the cloak! Friend! My good man!

(To Brichanteau.)

I think he 's deaf, Brichanteau.

DIDIER (who has not taken his eyes off him, slowly raises his head).

Speak you to me?

SAVERNY.

Pardieu! Read me the placard there above your head, for a fair price.

DIDIER.

I?

SAVERNY.

You. Do you not know your alphabet?

DIDIER (rising).

'T is the decree that every duelist, noble or villain, shall die upon the gallows.

SAVERNY.

You are in error, my good fellow. You must know that noblemen may not be hanged, for none but villains, in this world, where every privilege is ours by right, were made for hanging.

(To the gentlemen.)

How insolent these rustics are.

(To Didier with a sneer.)

You read but ill, my master! But perchance your sight 's a little short. Take off your hat, you will read better so. Take off your hat, I say!

DIDIER (overturning the table in front of him).

Look to yourself, monsieur! You flout me. Now that I 've read the placard, I must have my price!—and my price, marquis, is thy blood, thy head!

SAVERNY (smiling).

Surely we both come fairly by our titles. I know him for a commoner, and he detects the odor of my marquisate.

DIDIER.

Marquis and commoner may try conclusions. What sayest thou, marquis, shall we spill each other's blood?

SAVERNY (becoming serious again).

Monsieur, you go too fast, for other things must be considered. I am called Gaspard, Marquis de Saverny.

DIDIER.

What matters it?

SAVERNY.

Here are my seconds. Comte de Gassê,—I need say nothing of his competence. Monsieur de Villac, of the family of Feuillade, a kinsman of the Marquis d'Aubusson. Are you of noble birth?

DIDIER.

What matters it to thee? I am a foundling, left at a church door; I have no name. But 't is enough that I have blood to shed in fair exchange for thine!

SAVERNY.

Oh, no! monsieur, that of itself is not enough. And yet a foundling is a gentleman, if he but have the instincts of a gentleman; and how much more unseemly to degrade a noble than exalt a vassal. I 'll give you satisfaction. At what hour?

DIDIER.

At once.

SAVERNY.

So be it. Are you of right entitled to be thus distinguished?

DIDIER.

A sword!

SAVERNY.

He has no sword! Ah! pasque-dieu! that 's bad. 'T would seem that you must be of low degree.

(Offering Didier his own sword.)

Will you take this? 'T is trusty and well-tempered.

(L'Angely rises, draws his sword, and hands it to Didier.)

L'ANGELY.

To do a foolish thing, my friend, take a fool's sword. You are a gallant fellow, and will do it honor.

(With a sneer.)

Hark ye, to bring me luck, you 'll grant me, in return, the privilege of holding one end of your rope.

DIDIER (bitterly, as he takes the sword).

So be it.

(To the marquis.)

Now God have pity on the righteous cause!

BRICHANTEAU (leaping for joy).

A downright duel! this is charming!

SAVERNY (to Didier).

Where shall we stand?

DIDIER.

Under the lantern yonder.

GASSÉ.

Zounds! are you mad, messieurs? You cannot see! By Saint George, they 'll put each other's eyes out!

DIDIER.

We can see well enough to kill.

SAVERNY.

Well said.

VILLAC.

You cannot see!

DIDIER.

We can see well enough, I say! and either sword does of itself give light. Have at you, marquis!

(They throw aside their cloaks, take off their hats by way of salute, and throw them behind them. Then they draw their swords.)

SAVERNY.

Monsieur, at your service.

DIDIER.

On guard!

(They cross swords, and fight, foot to foot, silently and furiously. Suddenly the small door opens, and Marion appears, dressed in white.)

SCENE IV

THE SAME: MARION.

MARION.

What is this uproar?

(Spying Didier under the lantern.)

Didier!

(To the combatants.)

Have done!

(They fight on.)

Help! help!

SAVERNY.

Who is this woman?

DIDIER (turning his head).

Oh! my God!

BOUCHAVANNES (running up to Saverny).

You are undone! This woman's shriek was heard afar; I see the swords of the night watchmen gleaming in the darkness.

(Enter archers with torches.)

BRICHANTEAU (to Saverny).

Feign death, or thou 'rt a dead man!

SAVERNY (falling).

Ah!

(Aside to Brichanteau, who stoops over him.)

These cursed stones!

(Didier, who thinks that he has killed him, stands still.)

THE DISTRICT CAPTAIN.

In the king's name!

BRICHANTEAU (to the other gentlemen).

Let 's save the marquis! He 's a dead man if he 's taken!

(The gentlemen stand around Saverny.)

THE DISTRICT CAPTAIN.

Stay! Messieurs! Pardieu! this is bold, indeed! to fight a duel under the very lantern of the edict!

(To Didier.)

Surrender!

(The archers seize Didier and disarm him, where he stands by himself. The captain points to Saverny lying on the ground with the gentlemen standing around him.)

And who 's this other dull-eyed fellow? What 's his name?

BRICHANTEAU.

Gaspard, Marquis de Saverny. He 's dead.

THE DISTRICT CAPTAIN.

Dead? Then his case is ended. He has done well. 'T is better to die this way than the other.

MARION (alarmed).

What does he say?

THE DISTRICT CAPTAIN (to Didier).

Now, your case must be looked to. Come, monsieur.

(The archers lead Didier away on one side. The gentlemen carry Saverny off on the other.)

DIDIER (to Marion, speechless with terror).

Adieu, Marie; forget me! adieu!

(Exeunt all except Marion and L'Angely.)

SCENE V

MARION, L'ANGELY.

MARION (running after Didier, as if to retain him).

Didier! Why say adieu? and why bid me forget thee?

(The soldiers thrust her back; she returns to L'Angely in agony.)

Pray, is he lost because of this affair? What has he done, monsieur, and what is to be done to him?

L'ANGELY.

(He takes her hand, and leads her without speaking in front of the placard.)

Read.

MARION. (She reads and starts back in terror.)

O God! O God in heaven! Death! They've taken him from me! and they will kill him! 'T was I who did undo him with my shrieks! I called for help, but death came hurrying through the darkness at my call!—It cannot be!—A duel! is that so great a crime?

(To L'Angely.)

May it not be that he 'll not be condemned?

L'ANGELY.

By no means.

MARION.

But he may escape.

L'ANGELY.

The walls are high!

MARION.

'T is for my sins that he is made a criminal! God strikes at me through him. My Didier!

(To L'Angely.)

Dost know that nothing would have seemed to me too good for him? O God! the dungeon! death! perchance the torture!

L'ANGELY.

That may be. If they will have it so.

MARION.

But I can see the king? The king doth own a truly royal heart. Will he not pardon?

L'ANGELY.

Yes, the king. But not the cardinal.

MARION (in despair).

What would you bid me do in God's name?

L'ANGELY.

It is a capital offense, and he must needs descend the fatal slope.

MARION.

'T is horrible!

(To L'Angely.)

Monsieur, you freeze my blood with horror. Who are you?

L'ANGELY.

I am the king's fool.

MARION.

O Didier, my own! I am unworthy, vile, and execrable. But what Almighty God can do by a weak woman's hands I 'll show thee now. I follow thee!

(She goes out in the direction taken by Didier.)

L'ANGELY (alone).

God knows whither!

(He picks up his sword which Didier has left lying on the ground.)

Well, who would say that I 'm the fool?

(Exit.)

ACT THIRD

THE COMEDY

CHATEAU DE NANGIS

A park in the style of Henri IV. In the background, upon a hill, is seen the Château de Nangis, new and old. The old portion is a donjon with ogive windows and turrets; the new building is higher; it is built of brick with free-stone corners, and has a pointed roof. The main door of the old donjon is hung with black, and the coat-of-arms of the families of Nangis and Saverny can be distinguished in the distance.

SCENE I

M. DE LAFFEMAS, in the undress costume of a magistrate of the period; MARQUIS DE SAVERNY, disguised as an officer of the Anjou regiment, with black moustache and imperial, and a patch over his eye.

LAFFEMAS.

So you were present, monsieur, at the duel?

SAVERNY (twisting his moustache).

Monsieur, it was my privilege to be his second. He is dead.

LAFFEMAS.

The Marquis de Saverny?

SAVERNY.

Dead! 'T was a thrust in tierce, which pierced his doublet first, then made its way between the ribs and through the lungs until it reached the liver, causing thereby, as you can see, enormous loss of blood; so that the wound was horrible to look upon!

LAFFEMAS.

Did death ensue at once?

SAVERNY.

Almost. His martyrdom endured but a brief space. I watched him while delirium gave place to violent convulsions, and they in turn were followed by tetanus, *opistathonos* by *improstathonos*.

LAFFEMAS.

The devil!

SAVERNY.

From that fact I argue that 't is false that the blood passes through the jugular, and Pecquet and the doctors should be punished for cutting open living dogs to see their lungs.

LAFFEMAS.

Dead! poor marquis!

SAVERNY.

'T was a murderous thrust!

LAFFEMAS.

Pray, are you doctor of medicine, monsieur?

SAVERNY.

No.

LAFFEMAS.

But you 've studied medicine?

SAVERNY.

A bit. In Aristotle.

LAFFEMAS.

Morbleu! you have the jargon of the trade!

SAVERNY.

In truth, my heart is much inclined to mischief. To injure others gives me keenest joy. I take delight in doing harm, and I do love to kill. And so I early formed a purpose to become at twenty years a soldier or a doctor. I wavered long. At last I chose the sword. Results are not so certain, but more prompt.

There was a moment when my mind was filled with thoughts of turning poet, actor or bear-leader; but I do love too well to dine and sup all days alike, so deuce take bears and verses!

LAFFEMAS.

In furtherance of that whim, did you not study the poetic art, my friend?

SAVERNY.

A bit. In Aristotle.

LAFFEMAS.

And you were known to Monsieur de Saverny.

SAVERNY.

I am a common soldier risen from the ranks. He was lieutenant when I was lance-corporal.

LAFFEMAS.

Indeed?

SAVERNY.

At first I was Monsieur de Caussade's servant; he gave me to the colonel of the marquis' regiment. 'T was a poor gift; but one gives what one has. They made me officer; I have a black moustache and I 'm as good as any other man, and that 's my story.

LAFFEMAS.

And you were sent to break the sad news to his uncle at the castle?

SAVERNY.

I came with Brichanteau, his cousin, bringing the body in a carriage, so that he might be buried here, as he would have been married.

LAFFEMAS.

How did the old Marquis de Nangis bear his nephew's death?

SAVERNY.

Most calmly, without tears or outcry.

LAFFEMAS.

And yet he loved him dearly, did he not?

SAVERNY.

As one loves life itself. Childless himself, he had but one desire, one hope, one passion, this nephew, whom he loved with a warm heart, although 't would soon have been five years since he saw him last.

(The old Marquis de Nangis passes across the back of the stage. White hair, pale face, arms folded across his chest. Dressed in the fashion in vogue under Henri IV. Deep mourning. Medal and ribbon of the Saint-Esprit. He walks very slowly. Nine guards, in mourning, with halberds on the right shoulder and muskets on the left, follow him in three files at some little distance, stopping when he stops, and marching when he goes forward.)

LAFFEMAS (watching him).

Poor man!

(He walks toward the back of the stage, and looks after him.)

SAVERNY (aside).

Ah! my good uncle!

(Brichanteau enters and goes up to Saverny.)

SCENE II

THE SAME: BRICHANTEAU.

BRICHANTEAU.

A word with thee!

(Laughingly.)

God! since he died, he 's looking wondrous well!

SAVERNY (aside, pointing to the marquis).

Look, Brichanteau. Why didst thou force me to deal him this blow by telling him that I was dead? Suppose we tell him all? Wilt thou not let me try?

BRICHANTEAU.

On no account! 'T is most important that his grief be genuine. All eyes must see him shed these bitter tears. His mourning is a part of thy disguise.

SAVERNY.

Poor uncle!

BRICHANTEAU.

Perchance he 'll see thee soon again.

SAVERNY.

If he 's not dead with grief, he 'll die of joy. Such shocks are too rude for so old a man.

BRICHANTEAU.

It must be so, dear boy.

SAVERNY.

It pains me beyond words to see his bitter laugh at times, his silence and his tears. It tears my heart to see him kiss the coffin.

BRICHANTEAU.

A coffin with no corpse.

SAVERNY.

True, but he has me dead and bleeding in his heart. There is the corpse.

LAFFEMAS (returning).

Ah! poor old man! his eyes reveal the sorrow that consumes him.

BRICHANTEAU (aside to Saverny).

Pray, who is this ill-favored man in black?

SAVERNY (with a shrug, expressive of ignorance).

Some friend whom chance brings to the castle.

BRICHANTEAU (aside).

The crow is black like him, and smells the open grave. Now more than ever hold thy peace. He has a sly, unprepossessing face, that should make any fool as shrewd as Socrates.

(The Marquis of Nangis re-enters, still deeply absorbed in thought. He walks slowly forward, without apparently noticing anybody, and sits down upon a bank of turf.)

SCENE III

THE SAME: MARQUIS DE NANGIS.

LAFFEMAS (going to meet the old marquis).

Ah! we have met a bitter loss, monsieur le marquis! He was a nephew of rare worth, and would have solaced your declining years. I weep for him with you. Handsome and young, and never was a better nature. Serving God, reserved with women, ever upright in deed and wise in speech. A knight without reproach, and mourned by all! To die so young!

(The old marquis lets his head fall in his hands.)

SAVERNY (aside to Brichanteau).

The devil take his funeral oration! He praises me and makes him grieve the more, upon my faith! Do thou, to give him comfort, say some evil of me.

BRICHANTEAU (to Laffemas).

Monsieur, you are in error. I was of the same rank with Saverny. He was a sad

rascal, a vicious reprobate, and grew of late more vicious every day. Brave: so is everyone at twenty, but after all his death 's of small account.

LAFFEMAS.

A duel! Why, look you, a duel 's a great crime!

(To Brichanteau, with a cunning look, pointing to his sword.)

You are an officer?

BRICHANTEAU (in the same tone, pointing to his wig).

And you a magistrate?

SAVERNY (aside).

Go on.

BRICHANTEAU.

He was a whimsical, ungrateful liar; in short not much to be regretted. He went to church, 't is true, to wink at the fair penitents. He was a rakehell and a libertine, and nothing more.

SAVERNY (aside).

Good! good!

BRICHANTEAU.

With his superiors refractory and mutinous. His beauty too had vanished in great measure: he limped, and had a glass stuck in his eye, his hair had changed from blonde to red, his stoop become a hunchback.

SAVERNY (aside).

Enough of that.

BRICHANTEAU.

And then he gambled so that people talked of it. He would have staked his soul at dice, and I will wager that he 'd eaten up his patrimony at brelan. Night after night his worldly goods flew off at lightning speed.

SAVERNY (pulling him by the sleeve. Aside).

Enough! enough, I say! damnation! Thou dost console him overmuch!

LAFFEMAS (to Brichanteau).

To speak ill of a friend that 's gone is inexcusable!

BRICHANTEAU (pointing to Saverny).

Ask monsieur here.

SAVERNY.

I beg to be excused.

LAFFEMAS (to the old marquis, effusively).

Monseigneur, monseigneur, we will console you. We have his murderer, and we will hang him! He is well guarded and his doom is sealed.

(To Brichanteau and Saverny.)

I cannot understand the Marquis de Saverny. I swear that there are duels which no gentleman can shun. But to demean himself to fight with some low Didier!

SAVERNY (aside).

Didier.

(The old marquis who has not moved or spoken throughout the scene, rises and moves off slowly in the opposite direction to that from which he came. His guards follow him.)

LAFFEMAS (wiping away a tear as he looks after him).

In sooth, his grief afflicts me sorely.

A SERVANT (running upon the stage).

Monseigneur!

BRICHANTEAU.

Pray, don't annoy your master.

THE SERVANT.

My errand has to do with the interment of the late Marquis Gaspard. What hour is fixed?

BRICHANTEAU.

You 'll know in time.

THE SERVANT.

And then the actors from the town seek shelter for the night.

BRICHANTEAU.

The time 's inopportune for actors; but hospitality is still a duty.

(Pointing to a barn at the left.)

Give them that barn.

THE SERVANT (taking out a letter).

A letter upon urgent business.

(Reading.)

Monsieur de Laffemas.

LAFFEMAS.

Give it to me. 'T is mine.

BRICHANTEAU (to Saverny, who stands in a corner, lost in thought).

We must make haste, Saverny! come and make all things ready for thy burial.

(Pulling him by the sleeve.)

Come, art thou dreaming?

SAVERNY (aside).

Didier!

(Exeunt Brichanteau, Saverny and the servant.)

SCENE IV

LAFFEMAS (alone).

This bears the seal of state. Yes, 't is the great seal of red wax. How now! some pressing business? Let us open quickly.

(Reading.)

"Messire Lieutenant Criminel, you are hereby informed that Didier, the murderer of the late Marquis Gaspard, has escaped." Mon Dieu! that is a terrible catastrophe! "A woman, who is said to be one Marion de Lorme, accompanies him. You are requested to return at once." Quick, horses! and I thought I held him fast! One more affair conducted wretchedly and ruined! Woe 's me! Of two, not one in hand! One 's dead, the other fled. Ah! but I 'll have him soon!

(Exit.)

(Enter a troupe of provincial actors, men, women and children, dressed in character. Among them Marion and Didier in Spanish costume; Didier wears a broad-brimmed felt hat, and is wrapped in a cloak.)

SCENE V

THE ACTORS, MARION, DIDIER and the SERVANT, leading the actors to the barn.

THE SERVANT.

Here are your quarters. You are upon the manor of the Marquis de Nangis. Bear yourselves decently, and try to make no noise. There 's a dead body at the castle to be buried on the morrow. Above all do not break in with your songs and ribaldry upon the prayers that will to-night be chanted for his soul's repose.

LE GRACIEUX (a small, deformed man).

We shall make less noise than your hunting dogs, who rush out barking as we pass, and snap at us.

THE SERVANT.

But dogs, my good man, are not strolling players.

LE TAILLEBRAS (to Le Gracieux).

Hold thy tongue! thou 'lt have us sleeping in the open air.

LE SCARAMOUCHE (to Marion and Didier, who have thus far stood apart in a corner).

Now let us talk. Here you are members of our troupe. Why you, monsieur, were riding with madame *en croupe*—whether you 're man and wife, or two fond lovers—whether you 're flying from the officers, or from the sorceress who held madame in durance vile, concerns me not at all. What will you play? that 's all I care to know. Hark ye, black eyes, thou shalt do the *Chimènes*.

(Marion makes a courtesy.)

DIDIER (aside—indignantly).

To hear her thus addressed—by a vile mountebank!

LE SCARAMOUCHE (to Didier).

As for thee, if thou dost wish a noble part, we need a *Matamora*. He is long-legged like a pair of compasses, he talks in a deep voice, and takes long strides; and then, when he has stolen Orgon's wife or niece, he kills the moor in the last act. 'T is a tragic part. 'T will suit thee to perfection.

DIDIER.

As you please.

LE SCARAMOUCHE.

'T is well. But do not call me *you;* I miss the *thou*.

(With a low bow.)

Hail, Matamora!

DIDIER (aside).

Oh! the villains!

LE SCARAMOUCHE (to the other actors).

With this, we 'll go to dinner, and rehearse our parts.

(All enter the barn save Marion and Didier.)

SCENE VI

MARION, DIDIER, afterwards LE GRACIEUX, SAVERNY, then LAFFEMAS.

DIDIER (after a long silence and with a bitter laugh).

Well, Marie, have we fallen far enough? Vile creature that I am, have not I guided you in safety to the bottom of the pit? You chose to follow me! Alas! my destiny rolls on, and crushes yours, fettered to its wheel. And now, where are we? I told you what would come of it.

MARION (trembling and clasping her hands).

Didier! dost thou reproach me?

DIDIER.

Ah! may I be accursed! and more accursed of heaven, and more proscribed by man, than ever mortal was before, or than we are to-day, alas! if ever a reproachful word to thee should issue from this heart, which has no other faith but thee! When all the world has cast me off, and every hand is turned against me, art

not thou my savior and my hope and refuge? Who did outwit the jailer? Who filed my irons? Who came down from heaven, to follow me to hell? Who joined the captive in captivity? Who joined the fugitive in flight? What other heart so full as thine of loving stratagem, to rescue and encourage and sustain? And hast not thou, a feeble woman, saved me, ill-fated, misbegotten me, from my sad destiny and from myself? Hast not thou taken pity on the wretched outcast? Hast not thou loved me, whom the whole world hated?

MARION (weeping).

Didier, to love you and to follow you is happiness to me.

DIDIER.

O let me quaff oblivion from thy dear eyes! When God bestowed a heart within this clay, he ordained that a demon and an angel should bear me company throughout my life; but blessed be he, whose overflowing grace conceals the demon and reveals the angel!

MARION.

You are my Didier, my lord and master.

DIDIER.

Thy husband, am I not?

MARION (aside).

Alas!

DIDIER.

What bliss, to leave behind this jealous, unforgiving land, to take thee for my wife and mistress, and to so avow thee! Such is thy wish? O answer me!

MARION.

I 'll be your sister, you shall be my brother.

DIDIER.

Oh! no, do not deny my thirsty heart the joy ineffable of calling thee my own in sight of God, my sacred treasure! Thou canst go in perfect peace with me; the lover will protect thy virtue for the spouse.

MARION (aside).

Alas!

DIDIER.

Can you conceive my agony? to suffer a vile mountebank to speak to you and so pollute you! Ah! it is not the least among my many sorrows to see you thrown among these

wretched strollers! You, pure and noble flower, compelled to mingle with these men and women, whose speech is running over with impurity!

MARION.

Didier, be prudent.

DIDIER.

Great God! how I have fought against my wrath! That villain called you, *thou!* when I, your husband, scarcely dare as yet, for fear of taking something from your brow!

MARION.

Live on good terms with them, your life 's at stake—and mine!

DIDIER.

Ah! she is right, she 's always right! Although my evil fate doth every instant make its presence known, thou givest me thy heart, thy happiness, thy youth! Whence cometh it that all these gifts, for which a kingdom were a paltry price to pay, are lavished upon me? Naught in return have I to offer thee save poverty and madness. Heaven gives thee to me, but hell binds thee to me. That we

should merit this unequal destiny, what have I done of good, what hast thou done of evil?

MARION.

Ah, God! my happiness all comes to me from you.

DIDIER (resuming his gloomy demeanor).

Listen. When thou speakest so, doubtless thou dost believe it. But I am bound to warn thee that the stars frowned at my birth. I know not whence I come, nor where I go. My sky is black. Marie, give ear to my prayer. There still is time, do thou turn back. Leave me to tread my cheerless path alone. When the hard journey 's done, alas! and I am weary, the icy couch that doth await me at the end is narrow; there 's no room for two . . . Begone!

MARION.

My Didier, 't is my desire, in the darkness, and with no one by, to share with thee . . . oh! that, if nothing more!

DIDIER.

What meanest thou in God's name? Dost thou know, that if thou art impelled to follow

me, thou dost thereby invite exile and misery? Mad woman! And it well may be that thy adored eyes will melt away in tears, shed for thy bitter suffering.

(Marion lets her head fall in her hands.)

Ah, me! I swear to thee 't is a true picture, and thou dost move my heart to pity thee! thy future doth appall me! . . . Go!

MARION (sobbing bitterly).

Ah! kill me, rather than persist in talking thus!

(Sobbing.)

Mon Dieu!

DIDIER (taking her in his arms).

O Marie! O my treasure! Such bitter tears! I would have given all my blood for one of them! Do what thou wilt! Come with me! be my love, my fortune, my renown, my virtue, and my riches! O Marie! answer me! I 'm speaking to thee, dost thou hear me?

(He forces her gently to a seat upon the bank.)

MARION (releasing herself from his embrace).

Ah! you have hurt me.

DIDIER (on his knees, bending over her hand).

I, who would die for her!

MARION (smiling through her tears).

You made me weep, you naughty fellow!

DIDIER.

How beautiful you are!

(He sits down beside her upon the bank.)

A single kiss, upon the brow, pure as our love!

(He kisses her upon the forehead. They sit gazing ecstatically into each other's eyes.)

Look at me, Marie,—once again, so—forever so!

LE GRACIEUX (entering).

They 're calling Donna Chimène in the barn.

(Marion rises hurriedly from her place beside Didier. Saverny enters with Le Gracieux, and stops at the back of the stage, gazing earnestly at Marion, without noticing Didier, who has remained seated on the bank, and is hidden from him by a clump of bushes.)

SAVERNY (whose presence is unnoticed. Aside).

Pardieu! 't is Marion! a strange chance this!

(Laughingly.)

Chimène!

LE GRACIEUX (to Didier, who starts to follow Marion).

Stay where you are, Sir Jealous. I propose to have a little sport at your expense.

DIDIER.

Body of God!

MARION (aside to Didier).

Restrain yourself.

(Didier resumes his seat while she enters the barn.)

SAVERNY (at the back of the stage. Aside).

What in the devil sends her galivanting round the country in this fashion? Can this be the gallant who so opportunely came to my relief, and saved my life the other night? Her Didier! That 's the man.

(Enters Laffemas.)

LAFFEMAS (in traveling costume, saluting Saverny).

Monsieur, I take my leave of you . . .

SAVERNY (saluting).

Ah! there you are, monsieur! you 're leaving us . . .

(He laughs.)

LAFFEMAS.

Why do you laugh?

SAVERNY (laughing).

'T is a strange story, and quite worth the telling. Guess whom I 've found among these strolling players who have just arrived?

LAFFEMAS.

Among the players?

SAVERNY.

Yes.

(Laughing more heartily.)

Marion de Lorme!

LAFFEMAS (starting).

Marion de Lorme!

DIDIER (who has had his eyes fixed upon them since their entrance).

What 's that!

(He half rises from the bank.)

SAVERNY (still laughing).

Surely I must inform all Paris of it. Go you, monsieur, in that direction?

LAFFEMAS.

Yes, the fact shall be reported faithfully. But are you very sure you recognized her?

SAVERNY.

Vive la France! I rather think we know our Marion!

(Feeling in his pocket.)

I have her portrait in my pocket, a touching pledge of her affection, which she had painted specially for me by the king's portrait painter.

(He hands Laffemas a medallion.)

Compare it.

(He points to the door of the barn.)

You see her through yon open door—in Spanish costume—with a green basquine.

LAFFEMAS (looking first at the portrait, then towards the barn).

'T is she!—'t is Marion de Lorme!

(Aside.)

I have him!

(To Saverny.)

Has not she a companion 'mongst these heathen?

SAVERNY.

I 'll swear she has, although I have not seen him. These damsels do not travel by themselves around the country, unless they 're downright prudes.

LAFFEMAS (aside).

I 'll set guards at the door at once. I must find means to ferret out the spurious actor. He 's mine beyond a peradventure.

(Exit.)

SAVERNY (watching him as he goes. Aside).

Deuce take it! I have done a foolish thing.

(He takes Le Gracieux aside, who has thus far been standing by himself, gesticulating and mumbling his lines between his teeth.)

Who is this woman—sitting in the shadow?

(He points to the door of the barn.)

LE GRACIEUX.

La Chimène?

(Solemnly.)

My lord, I do not know her name.

(Pointing to Didier.)

Question this gentleman, her noble cavalier.

(Exit toward the park.)

SCENE VII

DIDIER, SAVERNY.

SAVERNY (turning toward Didier).

This gentleman? Pray tell me . . .

(Aside.)

God! 't is strange how he doth stare at me, but he 's my man.

(Aloud.)

My friend, if he were not in prison, you resemble . . .

DIDIER.

And you, were he not dead, have something of the bearing of a man—his blood be upon his own head!—to whom I said two words which laid him in his grave.

SAVERNY.

Hush! You are Didier!

DIDIER.

And you, Marquis Gaspard!

SAVERNY.

'T was you who happened to be at a certain place upon a certain evening. If that is so, I owe my life to you.

(He goes up to him with open arms. Didier recoils.)

DIDIER.

Pray pardon my surprise, my lord, but I believed that I had taken it from you again.

SAVERNY.

Oh, no! You rescued me, not killed me. Now, do you need a second, or a brother, or lieutenant? What will you have of mine? my worldly goods? my blood? my soul?

DIDIER.

No, nothing of all that. Simply that portrait of a woman.

(Saverny gives him the portrait. He gazes at it bitterly.)

Yes, 't is her noble brow, her bright black eye, her alabaster neck, and, more than all, her air of candor—yes, 't is very like.

SAVERNY.

You find it so?

DIDIER.

Was it for you, I pray you, that she had this portrait done?

SAVERNY (nodding his head affirmatively and bowing to Didier).

Just now you are preferred by her; she loves you and makes choice of you among a multitude of lovers. Lucky man!

DIDIER (with a discordant, despairing laugh).

Am I not very lucky?

SAVERNY.

Accept my warm congratulations. She is a good girl, and has had none save well-born lovers. Of such a mistress one may well be proud, for she confers distinction on a lover. And then it gives a man an air. It is good form. If any one inquires who you are, the answer is: "He 's Marion de Lorme's lover."

(Didier attempts to return the portrait; he refuses to take it.)

No. Keep the portrait. She is yours, and so the portrait comes to you by right. Pray keep it.

DIDIER.

Thanks.

(He places it in his breast.)

SAVERNY.

She 's charming in this Spanish costume, do you know? And so you follow in my footsteps! In the same way King Louis followed after Pharamond. I was supplanted by the Brissacs—both of them, upon my word.

(Laughing.)

Fancy! . . . the cardinal himself! Then little D'Effiat, the three Sainte-Mesmes, and the four Argenteaus[2] . . . You have the best of company in her good graces.

(Laughing.)

A little numerous, perhaps . . .

DIDIER (aside).

Oh! horror!

SAVERNY.

Now, do you tell me—by the by, I am believed here to be dead and my interment 's to take place to-morrow—how you stole a march upon the gendarmes and the seneschals. 'T was Marion no doubt who made your dungeon doors to open, then you fell in with this

strolling troupe and joined them. It must be a most moving tale!

DIDIER.

A moving tale, indeed!

SAVERNY.

Did she make eyes, for your sake, at some archer?

DIDIER.

Body and blood! you think so?

SAVERNY.

How now! you 're not jealous?

(Laughing.)

Oh! the apotheosis of absurdity! jealous of whom? of Marion de Lorme! Poor child! Pray do not preach a sermon at her!

DIDIER.

Have no fear.

(Aside.)

O God! the angel was a demon!

(Enter Laffemas and Le Gracieux. Exit Didier followed by Saverny.)

SCENE VIII

LAFFEMAS, LE GRACIEUX.

LE GRACIEUX.

My lord, I fail to comprehend what you would say.

(Aside.)

Good lack! an alcalde's costume and a sbirro's face! Small eyes adorned with monstrous eyebrows! Doubtless he plays the role of *Alguazil*.

LAFFEMAS (producing a purse).

My friend.

LE GRACIEUX (drawing nearer,—in an undertone).

'T is our Chimène in whom you 're interested, and you wish to know? . . .

LAFFEMAS (in an undertone, smiling).

The name of her Rodrigo.

LE GRACIEUX.

Her lover?

LAFFEMAS.

Yes.

LE GRACIEUX.

The youth who bends his neck beneath her yoke?

LAFFEMAS (impatiently).

Yes; is he here?

LE GRACIEUX.

Of course.

LAFFEMAS (rushing up to him, eagerly).

Well! point him out to me.

LE GRACIEUX (with a deep reverence).

I am the man. I 'm mad with love of her.

(Laffemas, disappointed, turns his back on him in anger, then draws near him again, shaking his purse in his ears and his eyes.)

LAFFEMAS.

Dost know the sound of génovines?

LE GRACIEUX.

Ah, God! that music is divinely sweet!

LAFFEMAS (aside).

I have my Didier!

(To Le Gracieux.)

Dost see this purse?

LE GRACIEUX.

How much?

LAFFEMAS.

Twenty gold génovines.

LE GRACIEUX.

Oho!

LAFFEMAS (shaking the purse under his nose).

Wouldst like it?

LE GRACIEUX (snatching the purse).

Yes, indeed I would.

(Theatrically. Laffemas listens with an anxious expression.)

Monseigneur! if thou hadst upon thy back —just in the centre—a great hump, equal in size to thy enormous paunch, and if thou shouldst fill both those sacks with ducats, louis, sequins and doubloons, why then . . .

LAFFEMAS (eagerly).

Well! then what wouldst thou say?

LE GRACIEUX (putting the purse in his pocket).

I 'd pocket the whole sum, and say:

(with a low bow)

Thanks, you 're an honest man!

LAFFEMAS (aside, in a rage).

A plague on the young monkey!

LE GRACIEUX (aside, laughing).

The devil fly away with the old cat!

LAFFEMAS (aside).

They have an understanding what to say if search is made for him. 'T is a concerted scheme. They all will be as dumb as he. Oh! these accursed devils of Egypt and Bohemia!

(To Le Gracieux, who is walking away.)

Stay, give me back the purse at least.

LE GRACIEUX (turning back,—in a tragic tone).

For what, pray, do you take me, good my lord? And what would the world say of us, should you propose and I be guilty of the infamy of bartering to you for paltry gold another's head. and my own soul?

(He starts to walk away.)

LAFFEMAS (detaining him).

That 's very fine! but give me back my money!

LE GRACIEUX (in the same tone).

I keep my honor, and have no account to render you, my lord!

(He bows and re-enters the barn.)

SCENE IX

LAFFEMAS (alone).

Vile mountebank! Pride in so base a soul. If only thou wouldst fall into my hands some day, and if I were not hunting nobler game! But how am I in all this to discover Didier? I cannot take the whole troupe bodily and put them to the question. What a dilemma! 'T is like looking for a needle in a field of grain. One must needs have the crucible of a bedevilled alchemist, which eats away the baser lead and copper, and thus brings to light the morsel of pure gold secreted in the shapeless mass. Must I return, and empty-handed, to his eminence the cardinal?

(Striking himself on the forehead.)

But yes!—a happy thought! Thank God! he 's mine!

(He goes to the door of the barn, and calls.)

Within there! messieurs of the troupe! a word with you.

(The actors come out in a body from the barn.)

SCENE X

LAFFEMAS, the Actors, among them MARION and DIDIER; afterward SAVERNY; then MARQUIS DE NANGIS.

LE SCARAMOUCHE (to Laffemas).

What do you want with us?

LAFFEMAS.

In simple language, this:—The cardinal has given it in charge to me to seek out some good actors, if there be any in the provinces, to act the plays he writes in the few leisure moments left him by the prince. For, notwithstanding all the pains he takes, his stage is in a fast declining state, and does him little honor for a cardinal-duke.

(The actors crowd around him eagerly. Enters Saverny who watches with much interest what takes place.)

LE GRACIEUX (aside, counting the contents of Laffemas' purse).

Twelve! and he told me twenty! he 's robbed me! the old villain!

LAFFEMAS.

Let each in turn declaim a few lines of his part, that I may judge, and so make my selection.

(Aside.)

If Didier comes safely out of this, he 'll be a clever fellow.

(Aloud.)

Are you all here?

(Marion stealthily approaches Didier, and tries to lead him away. He recoils and repulses her.)

LE GRACIEUX (going up to them).

How now! you must come with the rest!

MARION.

Just Heaven!

(Didier leaves her and mingles with the actors; she follows him.)

LE GRACIEUX.

Are you not lucky to be one of us? to have new clothes, a banquet every day, and every night recite lines written by a cardinal! Truly a happy lot!

(Aside.)

Who would have dreamed that that ill-omened crow was out recruiting comic actors for the cardinal-minister?

(All the actors stand in line in front of Laffemas, Marion and Didier among them. Didier does not look at Marion, but keeps his eyes fixed on the ground, and his arms folded under his cloak: Marion keeps her eyes anxiously upon his face.)

LAFFEMAS (to Le Gracieux).

Thou, in the first place. What art thou?

LE GRACIEUX (with a magnificent bow, and a pirouette which makes his hump shake).

I am the Gracieux of the troupe, and these are my best lines:

(He sings.)

A huge wig on his pate
Doth make a magistrate.
That fleecy mass doth pour
Forth punishments galore;
Torture, gallows, fetters,
Or imprisonment,
At nod of a still huger wig,
That 's called the president.

Hair some bald-head craven
Has stolen from the shaven—
Let some barber have it,
Cleanse and oil and lave it,
Powder it and dress it,
Curl it up in state,
And there you have a periwig,
That is, a magistrate.

The lawyer is a deluge
Of words poured out upon the judge,
A sly and crafty mixture
Of Latin and of Scripture—

LAFFEMAS (interrupting him).

Thou dost sing false enough to make a fish-hawk envious! Be silent!

LE GRACIEUX (laughing).

The notes are false, but the words true.

LAFFEMAS (to Le Scaramouche).

'T' is your turn.

LE SCARAMOUCHE (bowing).

I am Scaramouche, my lord. I open the scene thus in *La Duègne d'Honneur:*

(Declaiming.)

"There's no more goodly spectacle," a queen of Spain once said,
"Than a bishop at the altar, or a gendarme in the field
Save a thief upon the gallows, or a lady in her bed—"

(Laffemas interrupts him with a gesture, and motions to Le Taillebras to speak. Le Taillebras bows low, then draws himself up to his full height.)

LE TAILLEBRAS (with energy).

I am Taillebras. I come from Thibet, I have punished the Great Khan, and taken captive the rebellious Mogul . . .

LAFFEMAS.

Something else!

(Aside to Saverny, who is standing near him.)

Upon my soul, how lovely Marion is!

LE TAILLEBRAS.

That is among the best. However, an' it please you, I will be Charlemagne, Emperor of the West.

(He declaims with emphasis.)

"Oh! irony of fate! O Heaven! I call on thee! Look down, O Heaven, upon my cruel pain! I must despoil myself of my own treasure, deliver to another a love that 's all my own, endow therewith my foe, and fill his heart with joy, while poisoning my own with bitter grief. As if, O birds, ye did not for yourselves build nests among the trees; as if, O bees, you did not for yourselves swarm in the fields; as if, O bulls, ye did not for yourselves go grazing o'er the plain; as if, O sheep, ye did not for yourselves bear the soft wool!"

LAFFEMAS.

Well done!

(To Saverny.)

Tudieu! what charming verses! they are from Garnier's *Bradamante!* A poet in a thousand!

(To Marion.)

Now 't is your turn, my dear. Your name?

MARION (trembling).

I am La Chimène.

LAFFEMAS.

Oho! Chimène? In that case you must have a lover, who runs his man through in a duel . . .

MARION (alarmed).

A lover?

LAFFEMAS (with a sneering laugh).

I have a good memory. And who escapes . . .

MARION (aside).

O God!

LAFFEMAS.

Tell us the story.

MARION (half facing Didier).

"Since life and honor are of little weight to hinder thee from rushing headlong to thy death, if ever I did love thee, my own Rodrigo, do thou now defend thyself for

stealing me away from Don Sanchez, and thus requite my love. Fight manfully to free me from a plight which soon will hand me over to the object of my loathing. Need I say more? Go, look to thy defense, and so put me to silence and compel my homage; and if thy heart still fondly turns to me, be thou victorious in the fight, wherein Chimène 's the prize!"

(Laffemas rises gallantly, and kisses her hand. Marion, pale as death, glances at Didier, who stands motionless, looking at the ground.)

LAFFEMAS.

Certes, no one could play upon the secret fibres of our hearts more potently than you. You are adorable!

(To Saverny.)

'T is not to be denied that Corneille is inferior to Garnier. And yet he cuts a better figure as a poet because he has the honor of his Eminence's patronage.

(To Marion.)

What splendid talent! and what lovely eyes! To bury yourself thus is a great pity. You are not in your proper sphere, madame. Pray sit you there.

(He sits down and motions to Marion to sit beside him. She draws back.)

MARION (aside to Didier, in an agonized tone).

Let us remain together, in God's name!

LAFFEMAS.

Pray come and sit beside me.

(Didier repulses Marion, who sinks down in terror, upon the bank, near Laffemas.)

MARION (aside).

O Heaven! how I tremble!

LAFFEMAS (to Marion with a reproachful smile).

At last!

(To Didier.)

Your name!

(Didier takes a step toward Laffemas, throws aside his cloak, and fixes his hat firmly upon his head.)

DIDIER (solemnly).

My name is Didier.

MARION, LAFFEMAS, SAVERNY.

Didier!

(General stupefaction.)

DIDIER (to Laffemas, whose face wears a triumphant sneering smile).

You may dismiss them all. You have your prey. He voluntarily resumes his fetters. Ah! but this joy has cost you an infinity of trouble!

MARION (running to his side).

Didier!

DIDIER (with a glance of icy coldness).

Nay, turn me not aside from this, madame!

(She shrinks away and falls fainting upon the bank.)

(To Laffemas.)

I 've watched thee prowling stealthily about, thou demon! in thine eyes I 've seen th' ill-boding glimmer of the beam from hell which shines upon thy soul! I might have shunned the worse than useless trap that thou didst set for me. But so much wasted effort moved my pity! Take me, and with me the reward of thy base perfidy!

LAFFEMAS (boiling over with wrath, but forcing himself to laugh).

And so, monsieur, you do not act in comedy?

DIDIER.

Thou art the actor!

LAFFEMAS.

I should act but ill. But I propose to write a play in concert with Monsieur le Cardinal; 't will be a tragedy, and you will have a part therein.

(Marion utters a shriek of terror. Didier turns contemptuously away.)

Nay, do not twist your head upon your shoulders; we will enjoy your acting to the end. Commend your soul to God, monsieur.

MARION.

Ah! . . .

(At this moment the Marquis de Nangis passes across the back of the stage in the same attitude as before, followed by his squad of halberdiers. At Marion's shriek, he halts and turns toward the party, without speaking.)

LAFFEMAS (to the Marquis de Nangis).

I call on you for help, Monsieur le Marquis. Good news! but let me borrow your escort. The murderer of Marquis Gaspard had escaped, but we have captured him.

MARION (throwing herself at the feet of Laffemas).

Monsieur, have pity on him.

LAFFEMAS (gallantly).

You at my feet, madame! Nay! 't is my place to be at yours!

MARION (still on her knees and clasping her hands).

Oh! monseigneur! show mercy unto others, if you would have a judge more jealous than

yourself, and ready, too, to punish, some day show mercy unto you!

LAFFEMAS (smiling).

What 's this? upon my word you 're fairly preaching at us! Ah! madame, reign supreme at balls and festivals, but do not preach. For you I would do anything, but this man has shed blood: it was a murder . . .

DIDIER (to Marion).

Up!

(Marion rises trembling to her feet.)

(To Laffemas.)

Thou liest! 't was a duel.

LAFFEMAS.

Monsieur . . .

DIDIER.

I say, thou liest!

LAFFEMAS.

Hold your peace!

(To Marion.)

Blood calls for blood. It grieves me sorely to be harsh with him. But he has slain! slain whom? Marquis Gaspard de Saverny, a youth of noble parts,

(Pointing to M. de Nangis.)

and nephew of this excellent old man! It is the greatest loss for France and for the king! Were he not dead, why, then, I do not say—my heart is not of flint—and if . . .

SAVERNY (stepping forward).

He whom you think dead is not dead. He 's here before you!

(General amazement.)

LAFFEMAS (with a start).

Gaspard de Saverny! Why, nothing but a miracle. They have his coffin at the castle!

SAVERNY (tearing off his false moustache, his plaster and his black wig).

He is not dead, I tell you. Do you know me now?

MARQUIS DE NANGIS (as if waking from a dream, he cries out and throws himself into Saverny's arms).

My Gaspard! my dear child! my nephew!

(They embrace most affectionately.)

MARION (falling on her knees and looking upward).

Ah! Didier is saved! Just God!

DIDIER (coldly, to Saverny).

What was the use? It was my wish to die.

MARION (still on her knees).

May God protect him!

DIDIER (continuing, without listening to her).

Were it not so, think you he would have caught me in his trap, and that I would not with my heel have wrecked his spider's web spun to catch gnats withal? Death is henceforth the only blessing that I covet. You do but ill repay the debt you owe me for the life I saved.

MARION.

What says he? You shall live!

LAFFEMAS.

The end 's not yet. Is there no doubt that this is Gaspard de Saverny?

MARION.

No.

LAFFEMAS.

If that were made clear, 't would be well.

MARION (pointing to the Marquis de Nangis, who still holds Saverny in a close embrace).

Look at the old man, how he smiles and weeps.

LAFFEMAS.

Is he in very truth Gaspard de Saverny?

MARION.

How can you doubt in view of that embrace?

MARQUIS DE NANGIS (turning toward them).

You ask if it is he? my Gaspard! my beloved son! my blood! my life!

(To Marion.)

Did he not ask if it is he, madame?

LAFFEMAS (to the Marquis de Nangis).

You then declare that he is Gaspard de Saverny—your nephew?

MARQUIS DE NANGIS (forcibly).

Yes!

LAFFEMAS.

By virtue of that declaration,

(To Saverny.)

in the king's name, Marquis Gaspard, I do arrest you . . . Your sword.

(Amazement and consternation among the listeners.)

MARQUIS DE NANGIS.

O my son!

MARION.

Heaven help me!

DIDIER.

One head more! In fact, he should have two—one in each hand, at least—to take back to the Roman Cardinal!

MARQUIS DE NANGIS.

By what right? . . .

LAFFEMAS.

Go ask the reasons of his Eminence. The ordinance extends to all survivors of a duel.

(To Saverny.)

Give me your sword.

DIDIER (glancing at Saverny).

Thou madman!

SAVERNY (drawing his sword, and handing it to Laffemas).

Here it is.

MARQUIS DE NANGIS (stopping him).

One instant! No one save myself is master here; mine is the only jurisdiction in this castle, high or low; our lord the king would be my guest here, nothing more.

(To Saverny.)

Give up thy sword to none but me.

(Saverny hands him his sword and embraces him warmly.)

LAFFEMAS.

In all respect, monseigneur, that is a feudal privilege, long fallen into desuetude. Monsieur le Cardinal may lay the blame for it on me, but as I have no wish to grieve you . . .

DIDIER.

Execrable wretch !

LAFFEMAS (bowing to the ground before the marquis).

I do assent to it. And in return, do you loan me your escort and your prison.

MARQUIS DE NANGIS (to his guards).

Your ancestors were vassals of my ancestors. I do forbid you all to move one step !

LAFFEMAS (in a voice of thunder).

Hark ye, my masters ! . . . I am the lord cardinal's lieutenant-criminal, judge of the secret court. Let both these men be placed in close confinement, and look to 't that four

of you stand guard at either door. You all shall answer for them. 'T will be most foolhardy to disobey, for if, when I bid one of you do this or that and hold his peace thereon, he hesitates, it must be that his head 's a burden to him.

(The guards, overawed, lead the two prisoners away without a word. The Marquis de Nangis turns indignantly away, and covers his eyes with his hand.)

MARION.

All is lost!

(To Laffemas.)

Monsieur, if you 've a heart . . .

LAFFEMAS (aside, to Marion).

I have a word to say to you to-night, if you will come to me

MARION (aside).

What can he want with me? He has a ghastly smile. His mind is deep, and full of shadows.

(Rushing up to Didier.)

Didier!

DIDIER (coldly).

Adieu, madame!

MARION (shuddering at his tone).

Alas! what have I done? Oh! wretched creature that I am!

(She falls upon the bank.)

DIDIER.

Yes. Wretched, in good sooth!

SAVERNY. (He embraces the Marquis de Nangis, then turns to Laffemas.)

Monsieur, will your stipend be doubled for two heads?

A SERVANT (entering—to the marquis).

All is made ready for the obsequies of Monseigneur Gaspard. I come to learn from you the day and hour appointed for the ceremony.

LAFFEMAS.

Return a month from this.

(The guards lead off Didier and Saverny.)

ACT FOURTH

THE KING

CHAMBORD

The salle des gardes at the chateau de Chambord.

SCENE I

DUC DE BELLEGARDE, in a rich court costume, resplendent with embroidery and gold lace, the ribbon of the Saint-Esprit about his neck, and the medal upon his cloak. MARQUIS DE NANGIS, in deep mourning, still attended by his squad of guards. They are walking across the apartment together.

BELLEGARDE.

Condemned?

NANGIS.

Condemned!

BELLEGARDE.

E'en so. The king will pardon him. It is a right inherent in the crown, a duty due

the name he bears. Fear not. He is a son of Henri Fourth, in heart as well as name.

NANGIS.

And I was his comrade in arms.

BELLEGARDE.

Vive Dieu! we both have worn out in the father's service, and right cheerfully, more than one doublet, and of iron not of silk! Go to his son, marquis, exhibit your gray hairs, and for all argument say: "Ventre-Saint-Gris!"—Let Richelieu find a better, if he can!—But be not seen at first.

(He opens a door at the side.)

He will be here anon, and, to be frank with you, the clothes you wear are of a cut that some may laugh at here.

NANGIS.

Laugh at my mourning!

BELLEGARDE.

Oh! these coxcombs! Wait you there, old friend. The king will soon be here, I hope. I will arouse his wrath against the cardinal; then, when I stamp my foot upon the floor, do you come forth.

NANGIS (pressing his hand).

May God reward you!

BELLEGARDE (to a musketeer, who is pacing back and forth in front of a small, gilded door).

Monsieur de Navaille, what 's the king about?

THE MUSKETEER.

My lord, his Majesty 's engaged . . .

(Lowering his voice.)

with a man dressed in black.

BELLEGARDE (aside).

'T is like he 's signing a death-warrant at this moment.

(To the old marquis, pressing his hand.)

Have courage!

(He leads him into the gallery adjoining.)

Until I summon you, employ the time by looking at these ceilings, done by Primaticcio.

(They go off together.—Marion appears, dressed in deep mourning, at the large door at the back of the stage opening upon the staircase.

SCENE II

MARION, the GUARDS.

THE HALBERDIER (on guard at the door; to Marion).

Madame, you cannot enter.

MARION (coming forward).

But, monsieur . . .

THE HALBERDIER (putting his halberd across the door).

You cannot enter.

MARION (scornfully).

'T would seem that you do use your lance against a lady here! elsewhere 't is used in her defense.

THE MUSKETEER (laughing, to the halberdier).

She had you there!

MARION (firmly).

I must, sir guard, speak with the Duc de Bellegarde on the instant.

THE HALBERDIER (lowering his halberd—aside).

Deuce take these gray-haired gallants!

THE MUSKETEER.

Enter, madame.

(She passes through the door, and comes forward with a determined air.)

THE HALBERDIER (aside, looking at her out of the corner of his eye).

'T is very clear the good old duke is not so venerable as he seems to be. In the old days the king would soon have had him in the tower of the Louvre for making assignations in his palace.

THE MUSKETEER (motioning to the halberdier to be silent).

Hush! the door opens!

(The small gilded door opens. M. de Laffemas comes out holding in his hand a roll of parchment, to which is appended by silken cords a seal of red wax.)

SCENE III

MARION, LAFFEMAS.

(Each makes a gesture of surprise at sight of the other. Marion turns away in terror.)

LAFFEMAS (in an undertone, walking slowly toward Marion).

What are you doing here?

MARION.

And you?

LAFFEMAS. (He unrolls the parchment, and spreads it out before her eyes.)

Signed by the king.

MARION (after glancing at it, she hides her face in her hands).

O God!

LAFFEMAS (putting his mouth to her ear).

Say, will you?

(Marion starts and looks him in the face. He fixes his eyes upon hers.)

Wilt thou?

MARION (pushing him away).

Tempter! begone!

LAFFEMAS (drawing himself up with a sneer).

So, then, you will not?

MARION.

Thinkst thou that I do fear thee? The king can pardon, and 't is he who reigns.

LAFFEMAS.

Just make the trial . . . Seek to turn to good account the king's good will.

(He turns his back to her, then suddenly returns to her side, folds his arms, and hisses in her ear.)

Beware lest I demand much more from thee some day!

(Exit Laffemas.—Enters Duc de Bellegarde.)

SCENE IV

MARION, DUC DE BELLEGARDE.

MARION (going to meet the duke).

Monsieur le duc, you are the captain of the guard.

BELLEGARDE.

What! is it you, fair lady?

(Saluting her.)

What 's your will, my queen?

MARION.

To see the king.

BELLEGARDE.

And when?

MARION.

At once.

BELLEGARDE.

Oho! that is short notice . . . Why?

MARION.

For something.

BELLEGARDE (laughing aloud).

On my word! Summon the king "for something!" How the minx talks!

MARION.

Do you refuse?

BELLEGARDE.

Why, I am always at your service!

(Smiling.)

Did ever we refuse each other aught?

MARION.

That 's very well, my lord, but may I not speak with the king?

BELLEGARDE.

Speak with the duke first. I do pledge my word that you shall see his Majesty at once. But meanwhile let us talk. How 's this, my dear? Have you gone virtuous? You, dressed in black! why, one would say you were a maid of honor! You used to be so fond of laughing once.

MARION.

I laugh no more, my lord.

BELLEGARDE.

Pardieu! I verily believe she 's weeping! You!

MARION (in a firm voice, wiping away her tears).

Monsieur le duc, I wish to speak upon the instant with the king.

BELLEGARDE.

But with what object?

MARION.

Ah! 't is for . . .

BELLEGARDE.

Hast thou, too, something 'gainst the cardinal?

MARION.

Yes, duke.

BELLEGARDE (opening the door of the gallery).

Go you in here. I put the malcontents all in this gallery. Do not come out, I beg you, till the signal.

(Marion enters. He closes the door.)

I had determined for the marquis to adventure this bold stroke. 'T will cost no more to work for two.

(The hall gradually fills with courtiers, who converse in groups. Bellegarde goes about from one to another. Enters L'Angely.)

SCENE V

THE COURTIERS.

BELLEGARDE (to Duc de Beaupréau).
Good-morrow, duke.

BEAUPRÉAU.
Good-morrow.

BELLEGARDE.
What 's the news?

BEAUPRÉAU.
There 's talk of a new cardinal.

BELLEGARDE.
Who 's the man? the Archbishop of Arle?

BEAUPRÉAU.
No, but the Bishop of Autun. At least, all Paris thinks that he 'll have the red hat.

ABBÉ DE GONDI.
It comes to him by right. He had command of the artillery at La Rochelle.

BELLEGARDE.
He had indeed.

L'ANGELY.

I much commend the Holy See. Here is one cardinal at least created in accordance with the canons.

ABBÉ DE GONDI (laughingly).

Ah! L'Angely, the fool!

L'ANGELY (bowing low).

Monsieur knows all my names.

(Enters Laffemas. All the courtiers crowd eagerly around him. Bellegarde watches them indignantly.)

BELLEGARDE (to L'Angely).

Fool, who 's that fellow in the ermine?

L'ANGELY.

The one on whom they all are fawning so?

BELLEGARDE.

Yes, I have never seen him hereabout. Is he some follower of Monsieur d'Orléans?

L'ANGELY.

He would be greeted less effusively.

BELLEGARDE (watching Laffemas strutting about).

What high and mighty airs!

L'ANGELY (in an undertone).

It is Sieur Laffemas, lieutenant-criminal, intendant of Champagne.

BELLEGARDE (in an undertone).

Lieutenant infernal! he who is called the cardinal's high executioner?

L'ANGELY (in an undertone).

The same.

BELLEGARDE.

That man at court!

L'ANGELY.

Why not? I pray to know. One wild-cat more in the menagerie. Shall I present you?

BELLEGARDE (haughtily).

Fool!

L'ANGELY.

Upon my word, if I were a *grand seigneur*, I would treat him tenderly. Be friends with him. See, every one is making much of him. If he is not allowed to take your hand, he 'll take your head!

(He seeks out Laffemas, and presents him to the duke, who bows with decidedly bad grace.)

LAFFEMAS (bowing).

Monsieur le duc . . .

BELLEGARDE (bowing).

Monsieur, I am much pleased . . .

(Aside.)

Just God! how are we fallen! Monsieur de Richelieu!

(Laffemas walks away.)

VICOMTE DE ROHAN (in a group of courtiers in the centre of the hall, laughing aloud).

Delightful!

L'ANGELY.

What is that?

ROHAN.

Why, Marion 's yonder in the gallery.

L'ANGELY.

Marion!

ROHAN.

I was just saying, "Marion, the guest of Louis the Chaste![3] delightful!"

L'ANGELY.

Indeed, monsieur, 't was very clever on your part.

BELLEGARDE (to Comte de Charnacé).

Monsieur Wolf-huntsman, had you good sport?

CHARNACÉ.

No, none at all. I had a disappointment yesterday. The wolves had eaten up three peasants. So I thought that we should have no lack of wolves at Chambord. Bah! I beat the woods, and found no wolf at all, nor any trace of one!

(To L'Angely.)

What canst thou tell us, fool, to make us laugh?

L'ANGELY.

Nothing of what is happening. Ah! yes . . . Two men are to be hanged—at Beaugency, I think—about a duel.

ABBÉ DE GONDI.

Bah! for so small a thing!

(The small gilded door is thrown open.)

AN USHER.

The king!

(Enters the king, dressed in black, pale, eyes cast down, with the insignia of the Saint-Esprit on his doublet and his cloak. His hat is upon his head.—The courtiers uncover, and silently form in two lines.—The guards lower their pikes, or present their muskets.)

SCENE VI

THE SAME: THE KING.

(The king walks slowly between the lines of courtiers without raising his head, halts when he reaches the front of the stage, and stands for some moments in silent reverie. The courtiers retire to the rear of the stage.)

THE KING.

Everything goes from bad to worse. Yes, everything!

(To the courtiers, with an inclination of the head.)

God have you in his keeping, gentlemen!

(He drops into a large arm-chair, and sighs deeply.)

Ah! I have slept but ill, Monsieur de Bellegarde!

BELLEGARDE (coming forward with three low reverences).

But, sire, no one sleeps in these days.

THE KING (earnestly).

'T is so, in truth. The State is marching with such long and hurried strides straight onward to the abyss.

BELLEGARDE.

Ah! Sire! 't is guided by a strong, broad hand . . .

THE KING.

'T is true, the cardinal-duke doth bear a heavy burden!

BELLEGARDE.

Sire! . . .

THE KING.

And one which I should spare his aged hands. But, duke, I have enough to do to live, without the cares of state.

BELLEGARDE.

Sire . . . the cardinal 's not old.

THE KING.

Bellegarde!—no one is listening or looking—frankly, what think you of him?

BELLEGARDE.

Of whom, sire?

THE KING.

Of him.

BELLEGARDE.

His Eminence?

THE KING.

Why, yes.

BELLEGARDE.

My dazzled eyes can scarcely bear the sight . . .

THE KING.

Is this your frankness?

(Looking about him.)

Here is no Eminence—either red or gray! No spies! Say on, what do you fear? The king desires a frank avowal of your sentiments touching the cardinal.

BELLEGARDE.

What! sire; frank at every point?

THE KING.

Yes, frank at every point.

BELLEGARDE (boldly).

Well!—he 's a great man.

THE KING.

At need, you 'll go to Rome to say so, will you not? Mark this: the state is suffering—dost understand?—'twixt him, who does the whole, and me, a mere nonentity.

BELLEGARDE.

Aha!

THE KING.

Does not he manage everything, peace, war, the state, the finances? Does not he make the laws and ordinances, issue edicts and injunctions? He is the king, I say! He has dissolved by treachery the Catholic League; he doth assail the House of Austria, to which the queen belongs, and which is well disposed to me.

BELLEGARDE.

Sire, he leaves you free to build your rabbit-warren at the Louvre. You have your share!

THE KING.

He plots with Denmark.

BELLEGARDE.

But he leaves you free to fix the value of the mark of silver with the jewelers.

THE KING (with increasing ill-humor).

He stirs up war at Rome.

BELLEGARDE.

He left you free to issue the late edict, whereby all bourgeois are forbid to eat and drink more than a crown a head at any cabaret, however much they 'd like.

THE KING.

And see all the fine treaties he negotiates in secret!

BELLEGARDE.

And what of your fine shooting-box *à la Planchette?*

THE KING.

He and he only does whatever 's done. To him petitions and requests all find their way. To the French people I am but a shadow. Is there a single one among them all who comes to me for aught that he desires?

BELLEGARDE.

Ah! yes, when they have the king's evil, sire!

(The king's wrath increases from moment to moment.)

THE KING.

He seeks to have me give my order to his brother, Monsieur de Lyon; but no, to that I 'll not submit!

BELLEGARDE.

But . . .

THE KING.

His whole family have palled upon me.

BELLEGARDE.

Ah! Sire! jealousy!

THE KING.

His niece Combalet leads an exemplary life![4]

BELLEGARDE.

Mere calumny!

THE KING.

He has two hundred foot guards.

BELLEGARDE.

Only one of horse.

THE KING.

Ah! that 's a pity!

BELLEGARDE.

But, sire, he is saving France.

THE KING.

Indeed, my lord?—He 's ruining my life! With one hand he makes war upon our infidels,—the villain!—and with the other signs a treaty with the Swedish Huguenots.

(He whispers in Bellegarde's ear.)

If I dared count upon my fingers all the heads that he has caused to fall upon the Place de Grève! All friends of mine! His purple robe is colored with the blood they 've

shed! and he it is to whom I owe my mourning garb!

BELLEGARDE.

Does he treat better his own friends? Did he show mercy to Saint-Preuil?

THE KING.

If those he loves, he loves with harsh and grudging tenderness, 't is very sure he loves me tenderly!

(Abruptly, after a pause, folding his arms.)

He banishes my mother!

BELLEGARDE.

But, sire, his purpose always is to do as you would have him do: he 's faithful, trustworthy, devoted . . .

THE KING.

I detest him! He vexes me, and weighs upon my spirit! I am not master here, nor am I free, and yet, mayhap I have some rights. Does he not fear that if he treads so heavily above my head, he may at last awake the king? For his uncertain fortune, however great it looms before our eyes, at all times totters at my slightest breath, and the

whole edifice would crumble should I say a single word aloud of what I say oft-times beneath my breath!

(A pause.)

That man makes the good bad, and the bad worse. The state, even as the king, already ill, is failing day by day. 'T is cardinal without and cardinal within, and king nowhere!—He snaps at Austria most savagely, he leaves my ships an easy prey to the first comer in the gulf of Gascony, and binds me to a coalition with Gustave Adolphe. What can I say beside?—In all things he appears as the king's brain, and permeates my family, my kingdom and myself! Ah! I am greatly to be pitied!

(He goes to the window.)

It rains, and still it rains!

BELLEGARDE.

Your Majesty is really suffering?

THE KING.

I 'm bored beyond endurance.

(A pause.)

I, the first man in France, to be the last! I willingly would change my lot for that of any poacher. Oh! to hunt all the day! to

have naught to disturb the freedom of one's wandering, and to lie down at night beneath the trees! to laugh at the king's men! to sing while the storm rages overhead! to live as free amid the forest as the birds in air! In his own hut at least the peasant is the king and master. But to have always 'neath my eyes that man in red, always in evidence, composed and stern, and saying to me ever and anon: "This must be done according to your pleasure, sire!" God's death! the man doth hide me from my people. He wraps me in his robe, as one might wrap a child, and when a passer-by says:—"What is that I see behind the cardinal?" the answer is: "The king." And then there are each day new lists of those who are to die. 'T was Huguenots but yesterday, to-day 't is duelists, whose heads he needs must have.—A duel! Monstrous crime in sooth! But heads, he must have heads!—What does he do with them, in God's name?

(Bellegarde stamps his foot.—Enter Marquis de Nangis and Marion.)

SCENE VII

THE SAME: MARION, MARQUIS DE NANGIS.

(The Marquis de Nangis comes forward with his suite to within a few steps of the king, and puts one knee to the ground. Marion kneels at the door.)

NANGIS.

Justice!

THE KING.

'Gainst whom?

NANGIS.

Against an execrable tyrant, Armand, called the Cardinal-minister.

MARION.

Mercy!

THE KING.

For whom?

MARION.

For Didier.

NANGIS.

For Marquis Gaspard de Saverny.

THE KING.

I 've seen those names somewhere.

NANGIS.

Mercy and justice, sire!

THE KING.

What 's your title?

NANGIS.

I am the uncle of the one.

THE KING (to Marion).

And you?

MARION (firmly).

The other's sister.

THE KING.

Even so, what seek you here, uncle and sister?

NANGIS (pointing to the king's hands, one after the other).

From this hand justice, from the other mercy. I, Guillaume, Marquis de Nangis, commander of a hundred lances, baron of the mountain and the plain, do call upon my overlords, the King of France and God, for aid against Armand Duplessis, Cardinal Richelieu. I am in quest of justice here. Gaspard

de Saverny, in whose behalf I seek it, is my nephew.

MARION (in an undertone to the marquis).

Speak for us both, my lord.

NANGIS (continuing).

He had last month an affair of honor with a gentleman, an officer, one Didier, of whose nobility I stand somewhat in doubt. It was a grievous error, but both bore themselves right gallantly. The minister had posted spies.

THE KING.

I know of the affair. Enough. What is it that you have to say to me?

NANGIS.

I say that 't is full time that you should look to 't, sire! I say the cardinal has plans that bode no good, and that he drinks the best blood of your subjects. Your father Henri Fourth, of royal memory, would never have abandoned thus his loyal nobles; he never raised his hand against them without due deliberation, and paid for their good faith to him by keeping faith with them. He knew that one can put men of the sword to better

uses than to have their heads cut off; that they are of great service in war time. He knew that well, whose doublet had been pierced by bullets more than once. Those were good times. I was of them, and think of them with reverence. In those days noble hearts were beating still. No priest would ever have laid hand on noble then. Heads were not sold so cheap. Sire! in evil days like those in which we live, take an old man's advice, and keep a handful of your noblemen. Perchance your turn may come to stand in need of them. Alas! some day it may be, you will groan in spirit, to think the Place de Grève kept holiday so often, and that so many nobles of undaunted courage, to whom your thoughts look back so longingly, and who would even yet be young and vigorous, died long ago! For we are all hot with the civil war, the tocsin that was sounded yesterday is echoing still throughout the city. I pray you be more sparing of the headsman's toil. His is the sword that should be kept in sheath, not ours. Be more penurious with your scaffolds. Fear lest you may some day be forced to weep for this or that great-hearted, gallant

man, whose bones are whitening in the gallows' chains! Sire! blood 's not refreshing dew; no crops spring up upon the Grève, whose soil is watered with it, and the people shun the king's balcony when Montfaucon is peopled at the Louvre's expense. Let courtiers die, if you must have their voices to distract you while the executioner 's at work! The voices of those fawning sycophants, who say that everything is well, that after all you are a Bourbon, and the son of Henri Fourth, however loud they be, can difficultly drown the hollow sound made by the falling of a human head. I warn you, do not play this game, O king, who one day must come face to face with God. I tell you, therefore, before aught is done, that, take it all in all, a combat is much better than a punishment; and that 't is not conducive to the happiness or honor of a state that headsmen should be more employed than soldiers; and that a priest who takes his tithes in heads, is a stern shepherd for this France of yours; and that this man, illustrious among the blood-thirsty, who has his hand upon your sceptre—has blood upon his hands!

THE KING.

Monsieur le Cardinal is my good friend. Who loves me must love him.

NANGIS.

Sire!

THE KING.

Enough. He is my other self.

NANGIS.

Sire!

THE KING.

No more haranguing to harass our mind!

(Pointing to his hair, which is becoming gray.)

'T is speechmakers who make my hair turn gray.

NANGIS.

But, sire, an old man, a weeping woman! Bethink you that men's lives are here at stake!

THE KING.

What do you ask?

NANGIS.

Mercy for Gaspard!

MARION.

Mercy for Didier!

THE KING.

The mercy that a king bestows is but too often filched from justice.

MARION.

Ah! sire! have pity on our heartache! Do you know its cause? Two passionate young men consigned to everlasting torment for a duel! To die! great God! to die a shameful death upon the gallows! You will have pity on them! I, woman that I am, know naught of how the king should be addressed. Perhaps 't is wrong to weep; but, in a word, your cardinal 's a monster! Why does he harbor malice against them? What have they done? Why, he has never even seen my Didier. Alas! whoever sees him, loves him. To put them both to death, at their age, for a duel! Their mothers! think of them, in God's name! Oh! 't is horrible! O Heaven! you surely would not do it!—Ah! we women cannot speak as men might do; we can but weep and shriek, while a king's glance doth bend and break our knees beneath us! 'T is true that they did wrong. If their wrong-doing doth offend you, pray

forgive them. 'T is their youth, you know! Mon Dieu! how often do young men know what they do? For a mere glance, a gesture, or a word—oft-times in truth for nothing—they take offense, grow hot and lose their heads. Such things are met with every day, as all these gentlemen can testify. Pray ask them, sire. Is it not so, messieurs? God! what a fearful tragedy! And you with but a word can save two heads! Oh! how I 'd love you, sire, if you 'd say that word! Oh! mercy! mercy!—Mon Dieu! if I could speak as I would speak, then you would see; you 'd say:—"She must be comforted, poor child; her Didier 's her very life" . . . I suffocate. Have pity!

THE KING.

Who is this lady?

MARION.

A sister, please your Majesty, who kneels in fear and trembling at your feet. You owe yourself unto your people.

THE KING.

True, but unto all alike. Never has the duello been more widespread in its ravages.

MARION.

You must show pity, sire!

THE KING.

I must make examples.

NANGIS.

Two boys of twenty, sire! think well of it. Their ages joined together make but the half of mine.

MARION.

Your Majesty, you have a wife, a mother, or a son—some one, in short, whom you do love with all your heart—a brother, sire!—Have pity for a sister!

THE KING.

A brother? no, madame.

(He reflects a moment.)

Ah! yes. I have MONSIEUR.[5]

(His eye falls upon the marquis's suite.)

Oho! Marquis de Nangis, what is this array? Are we besieged? Are we about to start on a crusade? Are you a duke and peer, I pray to know, that you come thus before us with your guards?

NANGIS.

No, sire, I am something more and better than a duke and peer, created to take part in stately ceremonies. I am a Breton baron of four baronies.

BELLEGARDE (aside).

This pride is too imperious and most inopportune!

THE KING.

Indeed. Begone to your own manors with your rights, monsieur, and prithee leave us ours in our domains. We do administer the law.

NANGIS (shuddering).

Oh! sire, in your father's name, think on their youth, and on their expiated sins,

(He falls on his knees)

and on the pride of a gray-headed man which lies crushed at your feet. Mercy!

(The king makes an angry gesture of denial. The marquis slowly rises to his feet.)

I was the comrade of King Henri, your father and ours, and I was present when that other—that vile monster—plunged his blade—I kept my dead king with me until evening,

as my duty was. Sire! I saw my father, my six brothers, fall one by one before the onset of opposing factions; the wife who loved me, her I also lost. And now—the old man whom you see before you is like the victim whom the executioner in wanton cruelty has kept fast bound upon the wheel the livelong day. The Lord has shattered all my members with his iron rod. And now the day is done,

(Placing his hand upon his breast)

and the last blow is dealt. Sire, God give you length of days!

(He bows low and goes off. Marion risés with difficulty, and totters to the recess of the gilded door of the king's closet, where she falls fainting.)

THE KING (to Bellegarde, wiping away a tear as he looks after Nangis).

A king must keep close watch upon himself in order to maintain his resolution. To do right is most difficult. That old man touched my heart.

(He muses for a moment, then abruptly breaks the silence.)

No pardoning to-day! I sinned too deeply yesterday.

(Approaching Bellegarde.)

Before he came, my lord, you had made many an indiscreet remark, which may prove harmful to you, when I repeat our conversation to the cardinal-duke this evening. I grieve for you. Henceforth beware.

(Yawning.)

Ah me! I slept but ill, my poor Bellegarde!

(He dismisses the guards and courtiers with a wave of his hand.)

Messieurs, leave us alone.

(To L'Angely.)

Stay, thou.

(Exeunt all save Marion, whom the king does not see. Bellegarde spies her crouching on the doorsill, and goes to her.)

BELLEGARDE (in an undertone to Marion).

You cannot stay at the king's door. Why crouch you here, glued to the floor like any statue? Come, let 's be off, my dear.

MARION.

I 'll wait here till they kill me.

L'ANGELY (aside, to Bellegarde).

Let her remain, my lord.

(Aside to Marion.)

Stay where you are.

(He returns to the king, who has seated himself in a large arm-chair and is lost in thought.)

SCENE VIII

THE KING, L'ANGELY.

THE KING (with a deep sigh).

Oh! L'Angely, come hither, for my heart is sick and filled with bitter thoughts. No smile upon my lips, and in my arid eyes no tears. Thou, who alone at times canst smooth my ruffled brow, come hither. Thou, who dost never fear my majesty, I pray thee cause one ray of merriment to shine in on my heart.

(A pause.)

L'ANGELY.

Life is a bitter morsel, sire, is it not?

THE KING.

Alas!

L'ANGELY.

And man a passing breath?

THE KING.

A breath and nothing more.

L'ANGELY.

And, tell me, sire, is it not a wretched fate to be a man and to be king?

THE KING.

One has a double burden.

L'ANGELY.

And how much better to be in the tomb, dense though its darkness be, than in the world?

THE KING.

So I have always said.

L'ANGELY.

Ah, sire! the only happy lot is to be dead, or never to be born. But man is doomed.

THE KING.

How pleasant 't is to me to have thee speak in this strain!

(A pause.)

L'ANGELY.

Once in the tomb, think you that one comes forth from it again?

THE KING (whose melancholy grows more and more marked at the fool's words).

That we shall know anon. Would I were there.

(A pause.)

Fool. I am most unhappy! Dost thou hear?

L'ANGELY.

I see. Your wasted cheeks, your glance, your mourning garb . . .

THE KING.

And how, I prithee, wouldst thou have me laugh? (Drawing near to L'Angely.) For thou dost waste thy pains with me. I tell thee frankly . . . And so what does it profit thee to live? A noble trade! King's jester! A bell that 's out of tune—a puppet that 's thrown down and taken up again, whose superannuated laugh is naught but a grimace. What dost thou upon earth now that thy occupation 's gone? Why dost thou live?

L'ANGELY.

I live from curiosity. But you, what satisfaction does life hold for you? Ah! I do pity you with all my heart! 'T were better that you were a woman than such a king! 'T is true, I 'm only a poor jumping-jack of which you hold the string; but, sire, your royal cloak conceals a finer string held by a stronger hand; and for myself, I much prefer to be a jumping-jack in a king's hands, than in a priest's! (A pause.)

THE KING (musing and more melancholy than ever).

Thou sayest true, though thou dost laugh at me. He 's an infernal villain. Can it be that Satan has turned cardinal? Suppose 't were he by whom my soul is thus possessed? What dost thou say to that?

L'ANGELY.

I oftentimes have had the same thought, sire.

THE KING.

We 'll say no more in that vein, for it must be sinful. See how misfortune dogs my footsteps. Here I came, with Spanish cormorants, and not a drop of water do I find to use them in! A country life! There 's not a pond in this accursed Chambord of size sufficient for a flesh-worm on the bank to view himself therein! If I would hunt—I have the sea to hunt in. If I would fish—I have the fields to fish in. Am I not most unfortunate?

L'ANGELY.

Your life is filled, indeed, with fearful sorrows.

THE KING.

How wouldst thou console me?

L'ANGELY.

Look you, there 's another still. You set much store, and with good reason, by the art of training the *alète* to hunt the partridge. The falconer is much esteemed by a true sportsman, which you are.

THE KING (eagerly).

The falconer is next to God!

L'ANGELY.

Well, two of them are soon to die.

THE KING.

At the same time?

L'ANGELY.

Yes, sire.

THE KING.

Who are they, pray?

L'ANGELY.

Two famous ones!

THE KING.

But who, in Heaven's name?

L'ANGELY.

The two young men whom you were asked to pardon.

THE KING.

What! Gaspard? Didier?

L'ANGELY.

I think those are the names. The last two.

THE KING.

How unfortunate! Two falconers! And that, just when the art is dying out! Oh! wretched duel! When I am dead that art will also pass away—like all the rest! Why was this duel fought?

L'ANGELY.

Why, one maintained that the *alète* was not the equal of the *alfanet* for the long cast.

THE KING.

No, he was wrong. And yet 't is surely not a capital offense!

(A pause.)

But, after all, my right of pardon cannot be renounced. I always yield too freely to the cardinal's good pleasure.

(A pause.)

(To L'Angely.)

'T is Richelieu's wish that they should die.

L'ANGELY.

But what is your wish, sire?

THE KING (after reflection).

They shall die!

L'ANGELY.

As I supposed.

THE KING.

Poor falconry!

L'ANGELY (going to the window).

Look, sire!

THE KING (turning with a start).

What?

L'ANGELY.

I beg you, come and look.

THE KING (rising and going to the window).

What is it?

L'ANGELY (pointing to something outside).

The sentinel below is just relieved.

THE KING.

Well? Is that all?

L'ANGELY.

Who is yon varlet with the yellow stripes?

THE KING.

The corporal.

L'ANGELY.

He 's stationing another sentry in the first one's place. What is it that he whispers in his ear?

THE KING.

The countersign. What is thy object, fool?

L'ANGELY.

'T is this: the kings of earth do sentry duty here. Instead of pikes and halberds they the sceptre bear. When they have reigned their full appointed time, comes death, that corporal of kings, and stations in their place another sceptre-bearer, to whom he gives the countersign from God; that countersign is CLEMENCY!

THE KING.

Not so. 'T is JUSTICE. Ah! two falconers; a grievous loss! But they must die!

L'ANGELY.

As you must die, and I.—The great and small, death swallows all with equal appetite. And yet the dead sleep peacefully, for all they lie so close together. Monsieur le cardinal harasses you and plays the tyrant, but have patience, sire. A day, a month, a year hence,

when we have lived out our allotted span, all three—the fool, the king, the master—we shall sink to sleep, and in that day, however haughty one may be, however towering in point of earthly pride, no man lies in his coffin more than six feet tall! Why, he is carried round already in a litter!

THE KING.

Yes, life is sad, and peaceful is the tomb. Had I not thee to cheer my heart a bit . . .

L'ANGELY.

But, sire, I am here to bid farewell to you.

THE KING.

What sayest thou?

L'ANGELY.

I am leaving you.

THE KING.

How now! what madness! Death alone can give release from a king's service.

L'ANGELY.

And I am soon to die!

THE KING.

Hast thou gone mad in sober earnest?

L'ANGELY.

Condemned to death by you, a Bourbon King of France.

THE KING.

If thou art jesting, fool, pray tell us wherein lies the jest.

L'ANGELY.

I took part, sire, in the duel 'twixt these gentlemen. Or, if not I myself, my sword at least did so. I give it up to you.

(He draws his sword and hands it to the king with one knee on the floor.)

THE KING (taking the sword and examining it).

A sword! yes, 'faith, it is a sword! Whence hadst thou it, my friend?

L'ANGELY.

Sire, I am of gentle blood. You have refused to pardon the wrong-doers; I am one of them.

THE KING (with a grave and gloomy expression).

If that be so, good-night. Prithee, poor fool, before thy neck is cut, let me embrace thee.

(He puts his arms around his neck.)

L'ANGELY (aside).

He takes the matter much too seriously.

THE KING (after a pause).

A king who 's truly king does never block the wheels of justice. But you are very cruel, Cardinal Armand. Two famous falconers and my poor fool, all for a paltry duel!

(He strides excitedly back and forth, with his hand upon his forehead. Then turns to the disquieted L'Angely.)

There, there! console thyself, for life is very bitter, the tomb is much to be preferred, and man is but a passing breath.

L'ANGELY.

The devil!

(The king continues to pace to and fro, and seems greatly excited.)

THE KING.

And so, poor fool, thou thinkest that they 'll hang thee?

L'ANGELY (aside).

How he goes on! the sweat is fairly pouring from my brow!

(Aloud.)

Unless a word from you . . .

THE KING.

Who then will make me laugh? If the dead rise, thou 'lt come and tell me so. 'T is a rare chance to solve the problem.

L'ANGELY.

What a charming mission!

(The king continues his promenade, addressing a word now and then to L'Angely.)

Ah! L'Angely! what a triumph for the cardinal!

(Folding his arms.)

Dost think that I could be the master, if I chose?

L'ANGELY.

Montaigne would say: "*How do I know?*" and Rabelais: "*Perchance.*"

THE KING (with a determined gesture).

Some paper, fool!

(L'Angely quickly hands him a sheet of parchment lying upon a table beside a writing-desk. The king hurriedly writes a few words, then hands the parchment to L'Angely.)

I pardon all of you!

L'ANGELY.

All three?

THE KING.

All three.

L'ANGELY (running to Marion).

Come, madame! to your knees and thank the king!

MARION (falling on her knees).

We have our pardon?

L'ANGELY.

And 't was I . . .

MARION.

Whose knees must I embrace then? his or yours?

THE KING (in amazement, staring at Marion). (Aside.)

What does this mean? Is it a trap?

L'ANGELY (handing the parchment to Marion).

Take this paper.

(Marion kisses the paper and puts it in her bosom.)

THE KING (aside).

Am I a dupe?

(To Marion.)

One moment, madame! you must give me back that sheet . . .

MARION.

Great God!

(To the king, boldly, pointing to her throat.)

Come, take it, sire! and tear my heart out with it!

(The king stops and recoils in confusion.)

L'ANGELY (aside, to Marion).

Good! keep it! stand your ground! the king will never put his hands upon you.

THE KING.

Give it me, I say.

MARION.

Come take it.

THE KING (lowering his eyes).

Who is this siren?

L'ANGELY (aside, to Marion).

He would not dare take aught from the queen's bosom.

THE KING (after a moment's hesitation, dismissing Marion with a gesture without raising his eyes to her face).

Go!

MARION (bowing low to the king).

I fly to save the prisoners!

(Exit.)

L'ANGELY (to the king).

She 's Didier's sister, one of the two falconers.

THE KING.

She 's what the humor seizes her to be. 'T is passing strange how she made me cast down my eyes—man as I am! Fool! thou hast put a trick upon me. I must grant thee pardon once again.

L'ANGELY.

Then grant it, sire, for God's sake! for every act of mercy lifts a weight from a king's heart.

THE KING.

Thou sayest true. I 've always suffered when the blood was flowing on the Place de Grève. Nangis was right, a dead man 's of no use; Montfaucon peopled makes the Louvre a desert.

(Striding back and forth.)

'T is treason to despoil King Henri's son of his prerogative of pardon to his very face. Why am I thus dethroned, downtrodden and

disarmed? entombed within this man as in a sepulchre? His robe 's my grave-clothes, and my subjects weep for me. No! no! I do not choose that those two youths shall die. Life is a gift from Heaven, too palpable and precious.

(After a period of musing.)

God who doth know what lies beyond may open the tomb door. A king, not so. I give them both back to their families. They both shall live. The old man and the maid will bless me for it. 'T is said, and I, the king, have signed! The cardinal will storm and rage, but that will please Bellegarde, i' faith.

L'ANGELY.

Once in a way one may be king by inadvertence!

ACT FIFTH

THE CARDINAL

BEAUGENCY

The donjon of Beaugency. A courtyard. In the background the donjon; a high wall on all sides. At the left a high, ogive door. At the right, a small arched door in the wall. Near the door a stone table in front of a stone bench.

SCENE I

WORKMEN.

(They are at work pulling down the corner of the wall at the back of the stage on the left. The breach is already of considerable size.)

FIRST WORKMAN (at work with a pickaxe).

Ouf! this is hard work!

SECOND WORKMAN (also with a pickaxe).

The devil take another wall like this, before I have to pull it down!

THIRD WORKMAN (also with a pickaxe).

Say, Pierre, hast thou seen the scaffold?

FIRST WORKMAN.

Yes.

(He goes to the high door and measures it.)

The door is narrow, and the lord cardinal's litter won't go through it whole.

THIRD WORKMAN.

Is it a house, in God's name?

FIRST WORKMAN (with an affirmative gesture).

With great curtains. Four and twenty bearers carry it upon their backs.

SECOND WORKMAN.

I saw the thing one stormy evening passing through the streets. You would have taken it in the darkness for a Leviathan.

THIRD WORKMAN.

Why has he come here with so many men at arms?

FIRST WORKMAN.

To see the two youths executed. He is ill and needs distraction.

SECOND WORKMAN.

Let 's get through with it.

(They resume their work. The wall is almost down.)

THIRD WORKMAN.

Hast thou seen the scaffold, brother, draped in black? That 's what it is to be a noble!

FIRST WORKMAN.

They have everything!

SECOND WORKMAN.

Wait and see if we shall have a beautiful black scaffold!

FIRST WORKMAN.

What did these nobles do to suffer death? Say, Maurice, dost thou understand it all?

THIRD WORKMAN.

No. It 's the law.

(They continue to pull down the wall. Enters Laffemas. The workmen cease their talking. He comes on at the back of the stage, as if he came from an inner courtyard of the prison. He stops near the workmen, and seems to examine the breach and give them some orders. When it is finished he bids them stretch from side to side a great black cloth which entirely conceals it; then he dismisses them.)

(Almost at the same moment, Marion appears, in white, heavily veiled. She enters through the large door, walks swiftly across the yard and knocks at the wicket in the small door. Laffemas walks slowly in the same direction. The wicket opens, and the turnkey appears.)

SCENE II

MARION, LAFFEMAS.

MARION (exhibiting a parchment to the turnkey).

An order from the king.

THE TURNKEY.

You cannot enter, madame.

MARION.

What!

LAFFEMAS (handing a paper to the turnkey).

Signed by the cardinal.

THE TURNKEY.

Pass in.

(As he is about to pass through the door, Laffemas turns, scrutinizes Marion for a moment, then walks back toward her. The turnkey closes the door.)

LAFFEMAS (to Marion).

What! is it you again? And here! 'T is a strange place for you.

MARION.

True,

(She exhibits the parchment triumphantly)

but I have the pardon!

LAFFÉMAS (exhibiting his).

And I the order that revokes it.

MARION (with a cry of alarm).

My order 's dated in the morning yesterday.

LAFFEMAS.

And mine last night.

MARION (covering her eyes with her hands).

My last hope 's fled.

LAFFEMAS.

Hope is no more than a mere transitory gleam. The clemency of kings is very timid. It comes with sluggish step, and swift of foot it flies away.

MARION.

And yet the king was moved of his own will to spare their lives.

LAFFEMAS.

What can the king do when the cardinal wills otherwise?

MARION.

O Didier! the last hope has flown!

LAFFEMAS (in an undertone).

No, not the last.

MARION.

O Heaven!

LAFFEMAS (approaching her.—In an undertone).

There is—within these walls—a man whom with a single word you can make happier than the king himself,—yes, and more powerful!

MARION.

Begone!

LAFFEMAS.

Is that your last word?

MARION (haughtily).

Prithee, hold your peace!

LAFFEMAS.

A woman's caprice passes understanding! You once were easily susceptible to words of love. To-day—even though your lover's safety be the stake . . .

MARION (without looking at him, she turns toward the small door with clasped hands).

I cannot now resume my life of infamy, were it to save thy life! My Didier! thy breath has raised me from the depths of

degradation. Beside thee naught remained of my old self; thy love made me a virgin!

LAFFEMAS.

Love him if you will!

MARION.

The monster! how he goes from crime to vice! O leave me pure!

LAFFEMAS.

I have but one more service in that case to render you.

MARION.

And that?

LAFFEMAS.

If you would care to see the spectacle, I can admit you. It will be this evening.

MARION (trembling in every limb).

Great God! this evening!

LAFFEMAS.

Even so, this evening. Monsieur le cardinal will be brought hither in his litter, to look on through the doorway.

(Marion is plunged in deep thought, and shudders convulsively from time to time. Suddenly she passes both her hands across her forehead and turns to Laffemas in desperation.)

MARION.

How would you help them to escape in God's name?

LAFFEMAS.

If—you consent?—In that case I can so arrange it that this breach, through which his Eminence will enter, will be guarded by two friends of mine.

(He listens at the small door.)

I hear a noise. Methinks some one is coming.

MARION (wringing her hands).

You would save him?

LAFFEMAS.

Yes.

(In an undertone.)

These walls have far too many echoes to speak freely here. Besides . . .

MARION (desperately).

Lead on!

(Laffemas walks toward the great door, and beckons her to follow him. She falls on her knees with her face turned toward the small door. Then she rises with a convulsive movement and disappears through the great door, following Laffemas. The small door opens. Enter Saverny and Didier, surrounded by guards.)

SCENE III

DIDIER, SAVERNY.

(Saverny is dressed in the height of fashion, and comes on with an air of mingled petulance and gayety; Didier, all in black, pale, and walking slowly. A jailer, accompanied by two halberdiers, escorts them. The jailer stations the two halberdiers as sentinels near the black curtain. Didier takes his seat without speaking upon the stone bench.)

SAVERNY (to the jailer).

Thanks! The air is most refreshing.

THE JAILER (leading him apart and speaking in an undertone).

Monseigneur, by your leave, two words with you.

SAVERNY.

Four, if you choose.

THE JAILER (lowering his voice more and more).

Is it your wish to fly?

SAVERNY (eagerly).

In what way must I go?

THE JAILER.

That 's my affair.

SAVERNY.

Are you sincere?

(The jailer nods his head.)

Monsieur le cardinal, you chose to keep me from returning to the ball! By Heaven! we 'll dance together yet! Ah! what a pleasant thing it is to live!

(To the jailer.)

When will it be?

THE JAILER.

This evening, when 't is dark.

SAVERNY (rubbing his hands).

'Pon honor, I am charmed to see the last of this abode. Whence comes this unexpected succor?

THE JAILER.

From the Marquis de Nangis.

SAVERNY.

My good uncle!

(To the jailer.)

Apropos, it is for both, of course?

THE JAILER.

No, I can save but one.

SAVERNY.

For twice the recompense?

THE JAILER.

No, I can save but one.

SAVERNY (shaking his head).

But one?

(Lowering his voice.)

Then, hark ye,

(Pointing to Didier)

there's the one that you must save.

THE JAILER.

You jest, monsieur.

SAVERNY.

No. He 's the one.

THE JAILER.

Monseigneur, what a mad idea! Your uncle does this thing for you, and for no other.

SAVERNY.

Is it so? Make two shrouds ready in that case.

(He turns his back upon the astonished jailer, who goes out. A clerk enters.)

The devil! one cannot be alone an instant!

THE CLERK (saluting the prisoners).

Messieurs, a councilor of the Grand Chamber is about to visit you.

(He bows again and exit.)

SAVERNY.

'T is well.

(With a laugh.)

To be but twenty years old, be living in September, and not to see October! Is it not tiresome?

DIDIER (at the front of the stage, apparently lost in profound contemplation of the portrait which he holds in his hand).

Come, look at me. Let thine eyes gaze in mine. So! Ah! how fair she is! and what surpassing grace! Would one believe it was a woman? No, 't is an angel's brow. God, when he dowered her pure glance, did make it rich with modesty, albeit not unmixed with passion. The childish mouth, half opened by a pretty whim, quivers with innocence! . . .

(He throws the portrait violently to the ground.)

Oh! why did not my nurse, instead of taking to her heart the wretched foundling,

dash his brains out on the pavement? How had I wronged my mother that she need have borne me! Why, in her misery—perhaps her crime—was she not motherly enough to strangle me, when banishing me from the breast that owed me sustenance?

SAVERNY (returning to the front of the stage).

See, my good friend, how low that swallow flies! 'T will surely rain this evening.

DIDIER (not hearing him).

A woman is a faithless, flighty creature! as stormy, as inconstant and as fathomless as ocean. Alas! I spread my sails upon that ocean. In all my heaven I had but the one star. I made the venture, and was wrecked, and now the grave is opening before me. Yet I was born for better things; my visions of the future were rose-colored, I had perhaps a something of celestial inspiration in my heart! O wretched woman! didst thou not shudder when thou didst forswear thyself to me, to me who left my very soul at thy discretion?

SAVERNY.

'T is Marion again! Your mind seems fixed upon her.

DIDIER (without regarding him, picks up the portrait and fixes his eyes upon it).

What! must I cast thee out among the vile ones of the earth, thou woman, who didst cozen me; thou demon, to all seeming enveloped in an angel's wings?

(He puts the portrait back in his bosom.)

Thy place is there.

(He walks toward Saverny.)

A marvelous thing! That portrait is alive! It is alive, I say! All night while thou wert sleeping, it was gnawing at my heart.

SAVERNY.

Poor fellow! Let us talk of death awhile.

(Aside.)

It saddens me a little, but it comforts him.

DIDIER.

What did you ask of me? I was not listening. For, ever since I first did hear that name, I have been much afflicted with a

vertigo by which my mind is weakened. I am giddy, and I cannot think, and I forget.

SAVERNY (taking his arm).

And death?

DIDIER (joyously).

Ah yes!

SAVERNY.

Tell me about this death, my friend. What is it after all?

DIDIER.

Did you sleep well last night?

SAVERNY.

Nay, very ill. My bed is hard enough to bruise one black and blue.

DIDIER.

Even so. When you are dead, my friend, your bed will be much harder, and nath'less you will sleep well. That 's the whole story. There is hell, 't is true, but that is nothing as compared with life.

SAVERNY.

Enough! my fear has taken flight. But to be hanged! deuce take me, there 's the rub!

DIDIER.

Why so? 't is no less death: you should not ask so much.

SAVERNY.

Speak for yourself. For my part I am ill-content. I stand in little awe of death (I say it without boasting), that is, when death is death, and not the gibbet.

DIDIER.

Death has a thousand aspects, and the gibbet 's one of them. Doubtless it is a most oppressive moment when the knot puts you out as one puts out a light, and grips your throat until your soul is driven forth. But after all, what matters it? If everything is black as night, for on the earth one can see nothing, what matter whether you are laid beneath a stone, which weighs upon you and records your virtuous deeds, or whether the night wind blows you about and sports with your denuded skeleton, after the crows have torn your flesh away in strips from the stone gibbet?

SAVERNY.

You 're a philosopher.

DIDIER.

Whether my flesh is torn apart by vultures, or devoured by worms, concerns the body. What care I? When the dark tomb has closed upon our sightless eyes, the soul doth with its finger lift the stone away, and flies . . .

(The councilor enters, preceded and followed by halberdiers in black.)

SCENE IV

THE SAME: THE COUNCILOR OF THE GRAND CHAMBER in his official robes; JAILERS, GUARDS.

THE JAILER (announcing).

The honorable king's councilor.

THE COUNCILOR (saluting Saverny and Didier in turn).

Messieurs, my mission is a painful one, the law is very harsh . . .

SAVERNY.

I understand. There is no hope. Say on, monsieur.

THE COUNCILOR (unrolling a parchment, from which he reads).

"We, Louis, King of France and of Navarre, decline to entertain the appeal presented by said culprits to the king. Touching the manner of their punishment, we, being moved thereto by our kind heart, do order that they be beheaded."

SAVERNY (joyfully).

Thank Heaven for that!

THE COUNCILOR (saluting again).

And so, messieurs, be ready. It will be to-day.

(He bows again and is about to withdraw.)

DIDIER (who has maintained his musing attitude, to Saverny).

As I was saying, after death, though they may drag the body on a hurdle, though there 's a gaping wound upon each swollen limb, though all the bones be broken, and the arms twisted from their sockets, and though the body be defiled in gutter after gutter, the soul comes forth unharmed and spotless from this mass of bleeding and impure dead flesh.

THE COUNCILOR (returning).

Messieurs, pray give your minds to your impending fate. Think well on it.

DIDIER (gently).

Nay, interrupt me not, monsieur.

SAVERNY (gayly, to Didier).

Down with the gibbet!

DIDIER.

Yes, I know. The spectacle is changed. The cardinal goes not abroad without his headsman. Work must be made for him. His axe would rust.

SAVERNY.

Zounds! man, you take it very coolly! And yet 't is of great moment.

(To the councilor.)

Thanks for the welcome news.

THE COUNCILOR.

Monsieur, I would that it were better still. My zeal . . .

SAVERNY.

I pray your pardon. At what hour?

THE COUNCILOR.

Nine, this evening.

DIDIER.

Good. May the sky at least be black as is my heart.

SAVERNY.

Where will the scaffold stand?

THE COUNCILOR (indicating the adjoining courtyard).

There, in yonder courtyard. Monseigneur will be there.

(Exit the councilor with his escort. The prisoners are left alone. Darkness is coming on. One can see the gleam of the halberds of the two sentinels, who are pacing silently back and forth in front of the breach in the wall.)

SCENE V

DIDIER, SAVERNY.

DIDIER (after a pause, in solemn tones).

'T is meet that we should think in these last moments of the fate that doth await us. We are almost of the same age, yet I am much the older. Therefore it is my duty so to act that my voice may exhort and guide you to the end: and more especially in that 't is I who have undone you: the challenge came from me: your life was happy: I had but to come into it, alas! to ruin it forever. Your destiny beneath the weight of mine did bend until it broke. And now we are to bear each other company into the darkness of the grave. Let us go hand in hand . . .

(The sound of hammering is heard without.)

SAVERNY.

What is that noise?

DIDIER.

The scaffold 's going up, or else they 're making coffins for us.

(Saverny sits down upon the stone bench.)

Often a man's heart fails him at the end. The secret charm of life still holds us fast.

(The clock strikes.)

Methinks that a voice summons us. Dost hear?

(It strikes again.)

SAVERNY.

No, 't is the hour striking.

(A third stroke.)

DIDIER.

Yes, the hour!

(A fourth stroke.)

SAVERNY.

On the chapel clock.

(Four more strokes.)

DIDIER.

'T is none the less a voice that summons us, my brother.

SAVERNY.

One hour more.

(He rests his elbows upon the stone table and buries his face in his hands. The halberdiers on guard are relieved.)

DIDIER.

Take heed, my friend, and do not waver, do not stumble at the only threshold that remains for us to cross. The door-way of the bloody sepulchre the headsman 's making ready for us is so low that no one can pass through it with his head. Brother! let us go forward with unfaltering step to meet their blows. Let the grim scaffold tremble, and not us. They seek our heads; we will not be found wanting, but will bear them high in air unto the headsman who awaits them.

(He draws near the motionless Saverny.)

Courage!

(He takes him by the arm, and discovers him to be asleep.)

He sleeps. And I was preaching courage to him! What is my courage beside his?

(He sits down.)

Sleep on, thou who canst sleep! 'T will not be long before my hour to sleep will come. God grant that death may be the end; that naught of the heart sealed within the tomb may live to hate what it has loved too well!

(It has grown quite dark. While Didier is becoming more and more absorbed in his reflections, Marion and the jailer enter through the breach at the back of the stage. The jailer, with dark lantern and a package, precedes her. He places lantern and package on the ground. Then he walks cautiously back toward Marion, who stands motionless in the opening, pale and bewildered.)

SCENE VI

THE JAILER.

THE JAILER (to Marion).

Above all things, be outside the wall before the appointed hour.

(He walks away, and during the remainder of the scene continues to pace back and forth at the back of the stage.

MARION.

(She comes forward with uncertain gait, as if absorbed in despairing thoughts. From time to time she passes her hand across her face as if she were trying to rub out something.)

His lips were red-hot iron; they seared my cheek.

(Suddenly she spies Didier in the darkness, utters a shriek, rushes up to him, and falls at his feet, gasping for breath.)

Didier! Didier! Didier!

DIDIER (as if suddenly awakened).

She here! Great God!

(In a freezing tone.)

Is 't you?

MARION.

What other should it be? Oh! let me stay here at thy knees! I feel so happy here! Thy hands, oh! give me thy dear hands! How they have bruised them! with the fetters, was it not? With fetters?—Oh! the wretches! See, I am here! the . . . God! 't is terrible!

(She weeps. Her sobs are audible.)

DIDIER.

Why do you weep?

MARION.

Pray, am I weeping? No. I 'm laughing.

(She laughs.)

We are to fly immediately. I laugh, I am content, for he will live! The horrid dream is past!

(She falls against Didier's knees, and weeps again.)

Oh! this is killing me, my heart is broken!

DIDIER.

Madame . . .

MARION.

(She rises, not hearing him, and runs to get the package, which she brings to Didier.)

We must not lose an instant. Put on this disguise. I have bought yonder men.

We can go forth from Beaugency unseen. We 'll take the street that skirts the wall. Richelieu will come to see how his commands are executed. Let us not lose a moment. The guns will be discharged on his arrival. If we are here at that time all is lost.

DIDIER.

'T is well.

MARION.

Be quick!—Ah! God! 't is he! yes, 't is his very self! Saved! Pray, speak to me. My Didier, I love you.

DIDIER.

A street that runs by yonder wall, you say?

MARION.

Yes, by that way I came, and saw how the land lay. 'T is a safe road. I watched till the last window closed. We may perchance fall in with a few women, but they will take you for a casual passer-by. When we are far away—put on these clothes—we 'll laugh to see you in such guise. Be quick!

DIDIER (pushing the clothes aside with his foot).

There is no haste.

MARION.

Ah! death is at the door! Come, Didier! let us fly! See, I have come to you.

DIDIER.

And why?

MARION.

To save you. God in heaven! questions like that to me! Why this cold tone?

DIDIER.

You know that we poor men are very often mad!

MARION.

Come, come! oh! come! time flies, the horses are in readiness. Whatever thou mayst choose thou shalt say afterward. But let us go.

DIDIER.

Who is the man who gazes at us so?

MARION.

The jailer. I have bought him too. Do you not trust these men? . . . you seem distressed . . .

DIDIER.

'T is nothing . . . One may often be deceived.

MARION.

Oh, come! If thou didst know, I suffer torments as the moments pass; I seem to hear the far off tramping of the crowd. Oh! let us hasten, I implore thee on my knees!

DIDIER (pointing to the sleeping Saverny).

Tell me, for which of us two do you come?

MARION (bewildered for a moment).

(Aside.)

Gaspard is generous. He has not called my name.

(Aloud.)

Is 't thus that Didier speaks to his beloved? Dear Didier, what have you in your heart against me?

DIDIER.

Nothing. Come, raise your head, and look me in the face.

(Marion, in fear and trembling, raises her eye to meet his.)

Yes, the resemblance is most striking.

MARION.

I adore thee, Didier, but come! in God's name!

DIDIER.

Will you not look at me once more?

(He gazes earnestly at her.)

MARION (terrified by his piercing gaze).

(Aside.)

O God! that other's kisses! can it be that he can see them?

(Aloud.)

Listen, Didier; you have a secret, you are angry with me. There 's something! You must tell me what it is. You know one frequently imagines evil things and then regrets it afterward, when misery ensues. Time was when I had my share of your thoughts. Is that time past and gone forever? Do you not love me as you used? Do you remember Blois? the little room that was my home in those old days? and how we loved each other in tranquility and peace, oblivious of all the world beside? But you were sometimes anxious even then. Often I 've said:—"Mon Dieu! if any one should see him!" 'T was a blissful life. And one day wrecked it all.—Dear heart! how many, many times you 've said to me, in words of flame, that I was your

own love, knew all your secrets, and could do with you whatever I might choose! What favors did I ever ask of you? You know that I am always guided by your judgment, but do you yield to-day. Your life 's at stake! Ah! live or die, I 'll follow you the same! with you, my Didier, I am content with either fate, flight or the gallows. Ah me! he pushes me away! Leave me your hand, that matters not to you, nor can it injure you if my head rests against your knees! I hastened hither and am very tired . . . What would they say, who knew me so light hearted and content of old, to see me weeping here! Pray, hast thou any cause to be offended with me? tell me that. Alas! do not forbid a wretched, wretched woman to embrace thy knees. Truly it is a grievous thing, my love, that I cannot obtain a single word from you. One should at least say what is on one's mind. Nay, rather plunge a dagger in my heart. See, I have dried my tears, and smile upon thee, and I would that thou shouldst laugh, and if thou dost not laugh, I will not love thee. For a time, a long, long time, I did what thou didst wish me to, 't is thy turn now. Thy heart 's

embittered by thy chains. Come, speak to me, and call me Marie.

DIDIER.

Marie, or Marion?

MARION (falling to the ground in deadly terror).

O Didier, be merciful!

DIDIER (in a terrible voice).

Madame, to gain admission here 's no easy task. These state bastilles are guarded, night and day, the doors are iron and the walls are twenty cubits thick. To whom, I ask you, did you prostitute yourself before the prison doors were opened to you?

MARION.

Who told you, Didier?

DIDIER.

My instinct. No one else.

MARION.

Didier, I swear by God's compassion, that my only purpose was to save you, snatch you from this place, beguile your executioners, and save you!

DIDIER.

Thanks!

(Folding his arms.)

Ah! madame, it is shameful beyond words that such an one as you could be so heartless and so lost to sense of shame!

(He strides back and forth, with explosive exclamations of rage.)

Where is the dealer in opprobrium and scandal, who assumes to sell my head at such a price? Where is the jailer? where the judge? in God's name, where 's the man, that I may trample him beneath my feet, and crush him as I crush this . . .

(He starts to crush the portrait between his hands, but checks himself, and continues, violently.)

The judge! Bestir yourselves, messieurs! make laws and judge! what care I whether the false weight that always turns the beam in your discreditable scales, be a man's head, or be a woman's honor?

(To Marion.)

Go you to him!

MARION.

Oh! do not treat me so! I tremble with dismay to find myself at every turn confronted

by your scorn. Another word, and I fall dead! Ah! Didier, if ever love was true and passionate and strong, 't is mine for you; if ever man was worshiped, Didier, my Didier, 't is you by me!

DIDIER.

Ha! hold your peace! I also might—to my destruction—have been born a woman; I might—no less than others—have been vile and infamous; have sold myself for gold, have proffered my bare bosom to the first comer to sleep thereon a while;—but if an honest man, enamored of a foolish thing called honor, had come to easy-virtued, kindly me; if I had chanced to meet a heart still penetrated with illusions—rather than not say to that honest man: "I am not pure!" rather than take him to my heart; rather than not with my own lips forewarn him that my chaste and guileless eye did naught but lie to him; rather than be so false, so thankless and so treacherous, I would have digged my grave with my own nails!

MARION.

Oh!

DIDIER.

How you would laugh if you could see yourself as you were pictured in my heart, that faithless mirror! Truly, it was well done of you to break it, madame, for you were mirrored there sincere and chaste and pure. O woman! what had this poor man, with his true, trusting heart, who worshiped thee so long upon his knees, what had he done to thee?

(Offering her the portrait.)

'T is fitting, by the by, that I should give thee back this pledge of pure and faithful love.

MARION (turning away, with a cry of anguish).

O God!

DIDIER.

Did you not have it made for my express behoof?

(He laughs, and throws it violently upon the ground.)

MARION (gasping for breath).

Oh! will not some one kill me, in pure pity?

THE JAILER.

The hour is passing.

MARION.

Ah! time flies, and with it goes the opportunity! . . . Didier! I have no right to say a word: I am a woman to whom no consideration 's due; you have heaped curses and reproaches on me, and 't is right you should; I have deserved much worse than ridicule and hatred; you are too kind, and my poor broken heart doth bless you for it. But the dread hour is at hand. Oh! fly! The executioner remembers you, though you think not of him. I have made all arrangements. You can fly—listen—and do not, I beseech you, say me nay; thou knowest what it costs me!—leave me in my dishonor, strike me down, trample upon me, spurn me with thy foot,—but fly!

DIDIER.

From whom? There 's no one in the world from whom I need to fly, save you, and 't is from you I fly:—the grave is deep.

THE JAILER.

The hour is passing.

MARION.

Fly! oh, fly!

DIDIER.

I will not fly!

MARION.

Have pity!

DIDIER.

Upon whom?

MARION.

Great God! to see thee seized and bound! to see thee . . . No. I 'll not think of it, for I should die with terror. Oh, I pray thee, come! Is it thy wish that I should be thy servant? Wilt thou not take me, with my expiated crimes, that thou mayst have something to trample underfoot? She, whom thou didst in days of trial deign to call thy spouse . . .

DIDIER.

My spouse!

(The report of a cannon in the distance is heard.)

If that be so, then that makes you my widow.

MARION.

Didier! . . .

THE JAILER.

The hour has passed.

(A rolling of drums. The Councilor of the Grand Chamber enters, accompanied by penitents carrying torches, and by the headsman, and followed by soldiers and the populace.)

MARION.

Ah! . . .

SCENE VII

THE SAME: THE COUNCILOR, THE HEADSMAN, SOLDIERS and POPULACE.

THE COUNCILOR.

Messieurs, I wait your pleasure.

MARION (to Didier).

Did I not tell thee that the executioner would come?

DIDIER (to the councilor).

We wait your pleasure, too.

THE COUNCILOR.

Which is he who 's called Marquis de Saverny?

(Didier points to Saverny, who is still sleeping.)

(To the headsman.)

Awake him.

THE HEADSMAN (shaking him).

How he sleeps! Hola, monseigneur!

SAVERNY (rubbing his hands).

Ah! how could they rob me of my sleep?

DIDIER.

'T is only interrupted.

SAVERNY (half awake, observing Marion and saluting her).

Good lack! fair lady, I was dreaming of you but a moment since.

THE COUNCILOR.

Have you made peace with God?

SAVERNY.

I have, monsieur.

THE COUNCILOR (handing him a parchment).

'T is well. I pray you sign this paper.

SAVERNY (taking the parchment and running his eyes over it).

The report. 'T will be a curiosity—the fact of my own death, attested by my own paraph.

(He signs and looks over the paper again.)

(To the clerk.)

Monsieur, you have made three mistakes in spelling.

(He takes up the pen once more and corrects them.)

(To the headsman.)

Thou, who didst waken me, wilt soon put me to sleep again.

THE COUNCILOR (to Didier).

Didier?

(Didier steps forward. The councilor passes the pen to him.)

Write your name there.

MARION (covering her eyes).

God! this is horrible!

DIDIER (signing).

Never did I sign aught so joyfully!

(The guards form in two lines, and lead them away.)

SAVERNY (to some one in the crowd).

Monsieur, pray stand aside so that the child may see.

DIDIER (to Saverny).

My brother! 't is for me you do this thing: let us embrace.

(He kisses Saverny.)

MARION (running to him).

And will you not kiss me? O! kiss me, Didier!

DIDIER (pointing to Saverny).

He is my friend, madame.

MARION (clasping her hands).

Oh! how remorselessly you crush me, poor, weak woman that I am, who, at the judge's feet or at the king's, have never ceased to beg for clemency, for you from them, and for myself from you!

DIDIER.

(He rushes up to Marion, gasping and bursting into tears.)

Oh, no! no! no! my heart is breaking! 'T is too horrible! No! I have loved her far too well: it is not possible to leave her thus. No! 't is too difficult to keep the face stern when the heart is broken! Come to my arms! Oh, come!

(He strains her convulsively to his heart.)

I am about to die. I love thee! and to tell thee so is happiness unspeakable!

MARION.

Didier!

(He embraces her again, frantically.)

DIDIER.

Come, my poor girl!—Oh, tell me, truly, is there any one of you, who would at such a time refuse his kisses to th' ill-fated creature, who did give herself to him without reserve? I was at fault! Messieurs, pray would you have me die before her very eyes, unpitied and unpardoned? Oh! come, and let me tell thee this! Of all the women in the world,—and those who hear me will applaud my words—the woman whom I love, in whom my faith is absolute, and whom, in short, I worship and adore, is thou! For thou wert kind and sweet and loving and devoted. My life is done, I am about to die, and death makes everything appear in its true light. If thou deceivedst me, 't was from excess of love! And then thy fall—hast thou not expiated it? Belike thy mother did forget thee in thy cradle, as did mine. Poor child! they sold thy innocence, no doubt, when thou wert young. Oh! raise thy head! Give ear, all of you. Standing where I do stand, this earth doth vanish like a shadow, and my mouth doth speak in all sincerity. And so I say, upon the scaffold—and when the innocent

do die thereon, there is no nobler place! —Marie, thou angel out of heaven, whom the earth hath stained, my love, my wife,—list, Marie,—in the name of God, toward whose dread throne death draws me swiftly on, I do forgive thee!

MARION (in a voice choked with tears).

Heaven!

DIDIER.

Now 't is thy turn.

(Kneeling in front of her.)

Forgive me!

MARION.

Didier! . . .

DIDIER.

Forgive me! I was the wrong-doer. God smites thee and afflicts thee by my hand. Still thou wilt deign to mourn my death. To be the cause of suffering to thee would be a grievous burden. Do not inflict it on me, but forgive me, Marie!

MARION.

Oh! . . .

DIDIER.

Say one word, thy hands upon my brow, I conjure thee. Or, if thy heart is full, and if thou canst not speak, make me a sign. I die, and thou must comfort me.

(Marion places her hands upon his head. He rises and folds his arms about her with a smile of celestial joy.)

Adieu! Forward, messieurs!

MARION.

(She throws herself wildly between him and the soldiers.)

No, 't is rank madness! If you think to slaughter him so easily, you must forget that I am here! Messieurs, messieurs, have pity on us! How must I address you? on my knees? I 'm kneeling to you now. If there is aught within your heart that quivers when you hear a woman's voice, if God has not chastised you all and cursed you, put him not to death!

(To the spectators.)

And you, messieurs, when you return this evening to your families, will find no lack of wives and daughters, who will say to you:— "Mon Dieu! it was a fearful crime! you

might have hindered it, and did not!"—Didier! they should know that I must go with you. They will not kill you if they 'd have me live.

DIDIER.

No, let me die. 'T is better so. My wound is deep, my love. To heal it would have been too hard a task. 'T is better that I die. But if the time should come—look how I weep!—that one more handsome or more fortunate than I should come to thee, remember thy poor lover in his grave!

MARION.

No! thou shalt live for me. Are they not to be moved, in God's name? Thou shalt live!

DIDIER.

Speak not of things that cannot be. Rather inure thine eyes to look upon my tomb. Embrace me. Thou wilt love me yet more dearly when I 'm dead, and I shall have a place kept sacred in thy memory. But to live beside thee, with my cankered heart,—O Heaven! I, who have never loved save thee alone in all the world, should cause thy tears to flow day

after day—thou canst not think of it without alarm; thoughts without number would pass through my mind upon the past, that I would not tell thee, and I should seem to play the spy, to doubt thee, and to suffer, and thou wouldst be unhappy beyond words.—Oh! let me die!

THE COUNCILOR.

The cardinal will pass a moment hence. 'T will still be time to sue to him for pardon.

MARION.

The cardinal! ah yes. The cardinal will come. You 'll see, messieurs, that he will listen to me. My Didier, thou 'lt hear what I will say to him. How canst thou think—'t is downright lunacy—that the good cardinal, an old, gray-headed man, a Christian, will not pardon thee? Didst thou not pardon me?

(Nine o'clock strikes. Didier motions to everybody to be silent. Marion listens in deadly terror. As the last stroke rings out, Didier leans upon Saverny for support.)

DIDIER (to the people).

You, who have come to see us as we pass, bear witness, if our names are ever spoken in

your presence, that we did listen both without a tremor to the clock that struck eternity for us!

(A salute is fired at the gate of the donjon. The black curtain which conceals the breach in the wall falls to the ground. The gigantic litter of the cardinal appears, borne by twenty-four guards, and surrounded by twenty others with halberds and torches. It is covered with scarlet cloth decorated with the Richelieu arms. The curtains are drawn close. It moves slowly across the back of the stage. Sensation in the crowd.)

MARION (dragging herself on her knees to the litter, and wringing her hands).

By the Christ you worship, by your ancestors, monseigneur, pardon them!

A VOICE (issuing from the litter).

No pardon!

(Marion falls to the ground. The litter passes on and the procession of the two condemned men follows. The crowd hurries after with a great noise.)

MARION (alone).

(She half rises, and drags herself along on her hands and knees, gazing wildly around.)

What did he say? Where are they? Didier! Didier! No answer. No one here! The

crowd! Was it a dream? or am I really mad?

(The crowd streams back upon the stage. The litter reappears at the point where it passed from sight. Marion rises with a fearful shriek.)

Ah! he returns!

THE GUARDS (thrusting the people aside).

Give place! give place!

MARION (standing, with disheveled hair, and pointing out the litter to the people).

Look all of you! the blood-red man is passing!

(She falls upon the pavement.)

NOTES

PAGE 30. Honorat De Rueil, Marquis De Racan, a pastoral poet of the early part of the 17th century. He was the author of a collection of poems called "*Les Bergeries.*" He was noted for his absent-mindedness, of which many amusing anecdotes are told, and for his inability to pronounce the letters C and R.

[1] Gui de Chabot Jarnac, in a duel on July 10, 1547, hamstrung his adversary, François de Vivonne, Seigneur de la Chateigneraie with a back-handed stroke of his sword. It was deemed a very clever stroke, and gave birth to this proverbial expression, which has come to be commonly used in a bad sense, as meaning a treacherous, underhand manœuvre. It is not so used in the text, however,—indeed the phrase did not acquire its present signification until a later period than that covered by this play. The original *Coup de Jarnac* was not obnoxious to the charge of unfairness, and the duel was conducted in all respects according to the demands of honor.

[2] "Marion de Lorme had a vast number of lovers, but she herself admitted only seven, a mere bagatelle. Desbarreaux was the first; then came in succession De Rouville, Bussy-Rabutin's brother; Miossens, who was unfaithful to Madame de Rohan for her sake; Arnault; Cinq-Mars; M. de Chatillon; and M. de Brissac. It will be noticed that she did not reckon the cardinal in the number." DUMAS—*Les Grands Hommes en Robe de Chambre.* There is no question,

however, that she was the mistress of the cardinal not long before his death, sharing that honor with his niece, Madame de Combalet, and the Maréchale de Chaulnes. Marion died at the age of thirty-nine from an overdose of antimony. It was currently reported that she was not really dead, but that she caused the report of her death to be published to avoid arrest for participation in the disturbances of the Fronde, and made her escape to England. "According to some writers," says Dumas, "she married an English nobleman; after his death she returned to France with a hundred thousand francs, was attacked by robbers and married their leader; widowed a second time, she married a tax-collector named Le Brun; and, having lost her third husband, took up her abode in the Marais, where she died in 1741, under Louis XV., at the age of one hundred and thirty-three years!"

[3] The peculiar disposition of Louis XIII., to which he was indebted for this title, was not only the source of innumerable pleasant anecdotes: a much more serious result of it was that it caused suspicion to be thrown upon the paternity of Louis XIV., who was not born until Louis XIII. and Anne of Austria had been man and wife for more than twenty years. Some of the anecdotes illustrative of the excessive bashfulness of the king, as exemplified in the later scene with Marion, are collected by the elder Dumas in the early part of "Louis XIV. et Son Siècle."

[4] Madame de Combalet, Richelieu's niece, shared with the Maréchale de Chaulnes and Marion de Lorme the honor of being the cardinal's mistress in his later years. (The story goes that after Marion's first interview with Richelieu he gave her one hundred pistoles by the hand of his valet. She was deeply insulted and threw them in his face. "Look around," she said,

"and see if you haven't something better than pistoles to give me in remembrance of our interview." The cardinal's eye fell upon a Malacca cane belonging to Madame de Combalet, and he bestowed that upon Marion. It was very handsomely mounted and was worth some sixty pistoles. Marion made a practice of carrying it and was fond of relating the anecdote to any one who would listen.)

[5] The notorious antipathy between Louis XIII. and his only brother, Gaston, Duc d'Orléans, called *Monsieur*, is clearly hinted at here. This allusion was not without its weight in bringing about the prohibition of the fourth act by the censorship at the dictation of Charles X., as narrated in the preface.

EDITION DEFINITIVE

NOTE

Upon what was originally the first leaf of the original manuscript of MARION DE LORME, the play is entitled: "*A Duel under Richelieu.*" Upon the same leaf is written: "*Received at the Theâtre Royal de l'Odéon, July 14, 1829.* HAREL."

A subsequent first leaf, substituted for the above, gives the new title, MARION DE LORME, with this memorandum: "*June 2 to June 26, 1829. Played August 11, 1831.*"

The first act was begun June 2, and finished June 9. The second begun June 11, and finished June 13. The third begun June 12, and finished June 18. The fourth begun June 19. The fifth begun June 24, and finished June 26.

The following are the variant readings and unpublished scenes contained in the original manuscript.

ACT FIRST

SCENE I

MARION.

(Alone.)

(She goes to the window and looks out.)

All is as still as death. The moon is hidden. Better so. The sky is dark, the street deserted. It may be that 't is too deserted!—they who rob by night creep noiselessly about, like lovers in the dark.

(She sits down at the table, takes a book and reads a few instants, then lets the book fall.)

Oh! will he come? Suppose that he should fail to keep his tryst!

(She takes up the book again. A distant clock strikes one.)

'T is one o'clock! Alas! let him not come and let me die! For what am I that he should care for me?

SCENE II

DAME ROSE.

(Announcing.)

Monsieur de Saverny.

MARION.

(Half rising.)

Monsieur!

(Aside, to Rose.)

Dame Rose, did you not know my door was closed to-night?

(Aloud, to Saverny.)

A great and unexpected pleasure, marquis. By what happy chance?

SAVERNY.

I kiss your hands, fair lady. 'T is o'er late to lay siege to a lady's domicile. But 't is a privilege enjoyed by us king's pages to enter anywhere at any hour. A privilege, in truth, that has its disadvantages, and many nights has kept me on my feet all night; but 't is less onerous, and far less tedious, when by good luck the king 's a queen, as is the case to-night.

(He tries to take her hand, she draws it away.)

MARION.

I see that you are the same sprightly-humored, honey-mouthed gallant.

SAVERNY.

You jest, madame, but I am boiling over. Good lack! your heart must be as hard as any stone to leave us so, and to entomb yourself alive in such a place as this!

MARION.

Pray, who asked you to follow me?

SAVERNY.

Ah! tigress! ingrate! know you not how love doth urge us on, and when an houri doth accept us for her own, that we will follow her to the antipodes?

MARION.

Why those are phrases Artamenes might have spoken!

SAVERNY.

I came to Blois for you, and for naught else. Besides, my queen, the court 's at Chambord that the king may hunt.

MARION.

Is 't so? The king, too, comes, no doubt, for naught but me.

ACT THIRD

SCENE I

SAVERNY, LAFFEMAS.

. . . . . .

LAFFEMAS.

How did the marquis bear the tidings of his nephew's death?

SAVERNY.

Dry-eyed, without a murmur.

LAFFEMAS.

Yet he loved him much?

SAVERNY.

As one loves life. Childless himself, he had but the one love, the one desire, the one hope,—this nephew, whom he loved devotedly, although 't will be five years soon since last he saw him.

LAFFEMAS.

I know. He talked of him to me incessantly, at table, in the hunting-field. I love the good old man

with all my heart, and so I am enchanted that his nephew 's dead.

SAVERNY.

What 's that?

LAFFEMAS.

You understand that otherwise I should have had a burden of remorse to bear. I love right well the Marquis de Nangis. He is my host. Beneath his roof one wants for naught. But duty must be done.

SAVERNY.

What duty?

LAFFEMAS.

I had an order to arrest his nephew, but I find he 's dead. 'T is joyful news!

SAVERNY.

(Aside.)

Ventredieu!

(Aloud.)

Monsieur, may I know in whose company I am?

LAFFEMAS.

Monsieur de Laffemas, lieutenant civil and intendant of Champagne.

SAVERNY.

(Aside.)

Lieutenant infamous! The man they call the cardinal's executioner! And I, the better to conceal myself, came hither, trumpeting my simulated death, to see my

own grave dug! 'T is Laffemas! To fly would be imprudent. I will wait. I cannot take my leave until I 'm buried.

LAFFEMAS.

What are you mumbling there between your teeth?

SAVERNY.

I 'm thinking that 't is false that the blood passes through the jugular, and that some penalty should be awarded Pecquet and his ilk, who open living dogs to see their lungs.

LAFFEMAS.

'T is horrible! These doctors have no pity. Such fiendish cruelty deserves the cord!

SAVERNY.

You 'd hang them, would you not?

LAFFEMAS.

Upon the spot. I have hanged scores who 'd not done half so much to merit it! Poor dogs! and living too!

SAVERNY.

You must have known Monsieur le Maréchal de Marillac?

LAFFEMAS.

My master! Ah! I bear his image in my heart! 'T was I who had his head cut off *en Grève*. He had four charming sons!

SAVERNY.

And Bassompierre?

LAFFEMAS.

A chivalrous Castilian! a very god! 'T was I escorted him to the Bastille.

SAVERNY.

And Monsieur Henri, second duke of Montmorency?

LAFFEMAS.

(Laying his hand upon his heart.)

He is here.—Him too, I had beheaded; with Souvré and Lansac, Champmaillard, Boiscervoise. They were good fellows all! they never sought to quarrel with me. There 's but one who ever harbored malice; Jars, who was pardoned at the scaffold foot. Since then we never meet.

SAVERNY.

And Boutteville?

LAFFEMAS.

There 's a man who treated me most civilly! I weep to think of him. He was beheaded by my orders, on the Market-Place. No, *en Grève*. Ah! direful remembrance! it was for a duel! A duel now means hanging.

SAVERNY.

'T is a higher price to pay.

LAFFEMAS.

Ah! I, whose duty 't is to read their sentences, love all these people well. Souvré made me a provost, Lansac a baron; to Marillac I owe my office of lieutenant, and my country house. 'T was Montmorency

made me the intendant of Champagne. In fine I owe to them my modest fortune.

SAVERNY.

(Aside.)

He takes delight in counting up their heads upon his fingers! He makes his list of those he 's done to death, beheads or hangs them with all ceremony, and then repeats for them his *ora pro nobis!*

. . . . . .

In the following scene Laffemas has led off the old Marquis de Nangis in an agony of despair.

LAFFEMAS.

(Returning.)

In very truth a most lamentable affair!

SAVERNY.

(Bitterly.)

It should be worth some office to you to have taken Saverny.

LAFFEMAS.

Ah! 't is not for myself! I have made my sacrifice.

ACT FIFTH

SCENE I

FIRST WORKMAN.

All for the nobles!

SECOND WORKMAN.

Nothing for the people.

FIRST WORKMAN.

Suppose that some day we should arm ourselves with clubs and beat some fellow's brains out, or should do some even nobler deed,—open without a key the tax-collector's chest, or kill a stag belonging to the king;—Egad! we 'd see if they would build a scaffold hung with black for us!

SECOND WORKMAN.

We would, indeed! These noblemen have strange crimes of their own! They fight, and as they both know how to fence they first agree that one shall kill the other. But 't is wrong to kill a nobleman, a grievous crime. And so, to prove it beyond controversy, they put them both to death.—Sáy, dost thou understand it, Dominique?

FIRST WORKMAN.

No. It is justice. And I don't know Latin . . .

SCENE II

MARION, LAFFEMAS.

MARION.

Begone!

LAFFEMAS.

And that is your last word?

MARION.

Vile wretch!

LAFFEMAS.

A woman's whim 's a fathomless abyss! There was a time when you were kind at a less price. To-day your lover 's fast within our toils, and you can save him; 't is your sole desire, and still you will not! A life for one short hour! It 's a high price to pay!

MARION.

Oh! I have changed so greatly! Listen to . . .

(Pushing him away.)

But no! Thou wouldst not understand!

(She turns toward the prison, with clasped hands.)

Not even to save thee!

SCENE VI

It has become quite dark. DIDIER, SAVERNY asleep.—MARION returns with LAFFEMAS.

. . . . . .

LAFFEMAS.

You 'll not give me one kiss, though I have risked my head?

MARION.

(Recoiling with a shudder.)

No! . . . Before Didier!

LAFFEMAS.

(Seizing her by the waist.)

But at least we 'll say adieu.

MARION.

(Tearing herself out of his arms.)

Such men as you cannot believe in God!

(Laffemas seizes her and kisses her. Didier, whose attention is attracted by the noise, takes the dark lantern from the ground and turns the light suddenly upon the faces of Marion and Laffemas. All three stand for some seconds as if turned to stone. At last Didier laughs aloud—a laugh that is terrible to hear.)

DIDIER.

The place is excellently chosen—and the man, madame!

MARION.

(Beside herself.)

Oh! fly! oh! Didier! I swear upon my soul, it was to rescue you, to drag you from this place, to move this stony-hearted executioner! to rescue you!

DIDIER.

A thousand thanks! . . . In that case I am most ungrateful. What! I torment and worry you, while you, O chaste and faithful lover, for my sake, are generous enough to prostitute yourself to yonder judge, who comes to torture and to kill! Forgive me. I am one too many here! I am a hindrance, an embarrassment. The headsman and madame do dote upon each other!

. . . . . .

DIDIER.

Rather than be so false, ungrateful and perfidious, I would have digged my grave with my own nails!

MARION.

Oh! I will dig it!

DIDIER.

Why, in God's name? What detains you here? You are still fair,

(Pointing to Laffemas.)

and see, who comes!

MARION.

Oh! mercy!

SAVERNY.

(Asleep.)

Marion! my love! a single kiss!

DIDIER.

(To Marion.)

Methinks that some one calls you. I,

(To Laffemas.)

you

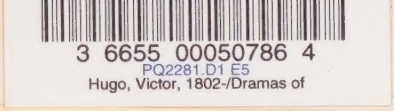
(Pointing to Saverny.)

and he. Even in this place, there are three of us!

MARION.

(Wringing her hands.)

Oh! would that I were broken on the wheel, and dead, and crucified!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